CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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Middle powers form new tech alliances P9

IBM launches first AI infra innovation centre in India P11

P12 Malavika Says Cinema Today Truly Has No Borders

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'Military conflicts cannot...'

PM Modi pitches for peace, calls for an early end to the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, stresses **dialogue and diplomacy** remain the only **path to resolving global conflicts**

NEW DELHI

In his first public response after conflict began in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said military conflicts cannot resolve issues and expressed hope for resolutions of Ukraine and West Asia war.

At a joint briefing with Finland President Alexander Stubb at Hyderabad House here, Modi said, "Today, the world is going through a period of instability and uncertainty. From Ukraine to West Asia, conflicts and tensions continue to persist. In such a global environment, India and Europe—two major diplomatic powers of the world—are entering a golden phase in their relationship. Our growing cooperation is providing new strength to global stability, development, and shared prosperity."

"India and Finland believe in rule of law, dialogue, and diplomacy," he said.

"Alexander Stubb is not only a well-known global leader but also a respected thinker and author. It is a matter of great honor and happiness for us that an experienced and dynamic leader like you is the chief guest at this year's Raisina Dialogue," Modi said.

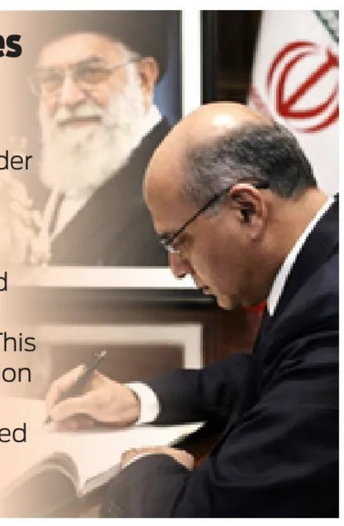
India and Finland believe in rule of law, dialogue, and diplomacy, Modi said at a joint briefing with visiting Finland President Alexander Stubb.

Talking about India-Finland ties, the PM said the two nations are shaping their ties into a strategic partnership in digitalisation and sustainability. "India-EU FTA will further strengthen trade, investment and technology cooperation between India and Finland," PM noted.

Stubb arrived in India on Wednesday for a four-day visit aimed at deepening ties between the two countries across key sectors such as trade, investment and critical technologies. "The visit will further strengthen Finland-India relations, including in the area of trade," Stubb said.

Finally, India condoles Khamenei's death

India formally condoled the death of Iran's supreme leader Ayotallah Ali Khamenei on Thursday. Foreign secretary Vikram Misri visited the Iran Embassy in India and signed the condolence book on bhealf of the government. This marks the first formal reaction from India on the supreme leader's death, who was killed on February 28, in a joint US-Israel strike on Tehran.



Iran defences 'shattered'

NEW DELHI

The conflict in the Middle East is rapidly expanding across the region as the US and Israel-led war with Iran enters its sixth day.

A newly-released high-resolution satellite imagery on Thursday showed one of the clearest visual accounts yet of the scale of the ongoing military campaign, targeting Iranian facilities, especially Tehran, by US and Israeli forces.

The images show damage across multiple strategic sites in Iran, including naval installations, drone facilities, missile bases, and airport infra. The imagery also captures the aftermath of Iranian attacks in other parts of the region, including a strike on a residential high-rise in Bahrain. The images document the effects of an air stikes that appears to have struck military installations across Iran.

Iran tightens counter attacks

Iran has retaliated by launching a wave of missiles and drones at Israel, as well as targeting US allies. Blasts have been reported in Qatar and Bahrain, while oil-rich Azerbaijan said it was attacked by two Iranian drones and Tehran claimed naval fighters had struck a U.S. tanker in the north of the Persian Gulf.

SPOTLIGHT

- 102 people dead, 638 wounded in Israeli strikes on Lebanon.
- Images published Thursday showed plumes of black smoke rising above Tehran after nearly a week of strikes on Iran's capital.
- Explosions have reported in Qatar and Bahrain capital cities as Iran retaliates by launching a wave of drones and missiles.
- Qatar evacuates residents near US embassy as 'precautionary measure'
- Repeated explosions heard in Abu Dhabi near Zayed International Airport
- Israel claims to kill Hamas commander in Tripoli
- Azerbaijan closes airspace near Iran
- Iran loses internet connectivity amid war

India sent vessel to help sinking Iranian warship

NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy launched search and rescue operations following a distress signal from the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena, which sank in the Indian Ocean after being struck by a torpedo from a United States submarine.

A distress call from IRIS Dena reached the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Colombo during the early hours of March 4, according to a statement from the Navy.

The frigate was positioned 20 nautical miles west of Galle, within the search and rescue region under Sri Lankan responsibility. Upon receiving the info, the Indian Navy initiated its efforts without delay.

As per the Navy, a long-range maritime patrol aircraft deployed at 1000 hours on March 4 to support the search operations that were already underway under Sri Lankan leadership. A second aircraft, equipped with air-droppable life rafts, remained on standby for rapid deployment if required.

INS Tarangini, a sailing training ship operating in the vicinity, received orders to assist and reached the spot by 1600 hours that day. By that point, the Sri Lankan Navy and other agencies had already begun search and rescue activities. INS Ikshak, a survey vessel, sailed from Kochi to reinforce the operation. It remains in the area conducting searches for missing personnel as a humanitarian effort on behalf of the shipwrecked crew.

Second Iranian ship awaits entry: SL

Colombo: Just a day after an Iranian frigate named IRIS Dena was torpedoed by a US submarine in the Indian Ocean off Sri Lankan coast, the island nation on Thursday stated it is deliberating appropriate action after a second Iranian ship has sought entry to its territorial waters. Sri Lanka on Wednesday stated it had recovered over 80 bodies of Iranian sailors killed after a US submarine attack sank the Iranian frigate - IRIS Dena - off Galle, the island's southern coastal town. Government spokesman and minister Nalinda Jayathissa was on Thursday responding to a query by the main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa in parliament about the second Iranian ship. "We are aware of it and are contemplating action to safeguard all lives on board," Jayathissa said. "We are intervening to resolve this issue to safeguard regional peace."

'Nirantar' Nitish exits Bihar hot seat for RS

PATNA

With Home Minister Amit Shah by his side, Bihar Chief Minister 'Nirantar' Nitish Kumar on Thursday filed his nomination for Rajya Sabha, putting an end to his 10-time term as the CM of Bihar.

"From the very beginning of my parliamentary journey, there has been a desire in my heart to become a member of both Houses of the Bihar Legislature as well as both Houses of Parliament. In keeping with this aspiration, I seek to become a member of the Rajya Sabha in the elections being held this time," the veteran politician stated in an X post prior to filing the nomination.

The 75-year-old leader, who took oath as the chief minister of Bihar for a record 10th time in November last year, expressed gratitude to the people of the state for "consistently" placing their trust in him.

> **From the very beginning of my parliamentary journey, there has been a desire in my heart to become a member of both Houses of the Bihar Legislature as well as both Houses of Parliament.**
>
> —Nitish Kumar, Bihar Chief Minister

"For more than two decades, you have consistently placed your trust and support in me, and it is on the strength of that trust that we have served Bihar and all of you with complete dedication. It was the power of your trust and support that has enabled Bihar today to present a new dimension of development and dignity," Kumar wrote.

The JD(U) supremo also promised full cooperation and guidance for the new government while stressing that he would continue his relationship with the people of the state. *More on page 8*

JD(U) workers take to streets

Protests erupted against Nitish Kumar's decision to move to RS, with distressed JD(U) workers, especially those from the CM's native Nalanda, gathering outside his official residence at Anne Marg. They declared, "No one other than Nitish Kumar is acceptable as the CM." The workers alleged a conspiracy behind Nitish Kumar moving to Rajya Sabha, claiming that it was the idea of the the "liquor mafia and some party leaders." Several Opposition leaders have questioned Kumar's move, slamming it as a "betrayal of people's mandate" and alleging that the decision may have been made under pressure.

Sanju Samson unleashed a 89 run carnage at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday against England to help India set up a title clash with New Zealand in the final of the T20 World Cup. England's Jacob Bethell's brilliant ton went in vain as the Indian's held their nerves to edge past the Englishmen.

Bose resigns as Bengal Guv; RN Ravi to replace

BENGALURU

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose resigned from his post on Thursday in Delhi, as per reports.

He served in the office for 3.5 years. The state of West Bengal will be going to elections in April or May 2026.

Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal took to X (formerly Twitter) to express her 'shock and concern' regarding the news. Shew wrote, "I am shocked and deeply concerned by the sudden news of the resignation of Shri C. V. Ananda Bose, the Governor of West Bengal."

She went on to say that she does not know the reason behind the resignation currently but speculated that 'some pressure from the Union Home Minister' propelled Bose to this step.

"The reasons behind his resignation are not known to me at this moment. However, given the prevailing circumstances, I would not be surprised if the Governor has been subjected to some pressure from the Union Home Minister to serve certain political interests on the eve of the forthcoming State Assembly elections.

"Union Home Minister just informed me that Shri R.N. Ravi is being appointed as Governor of West Bengal.

IAF's Su-30MKI fighter jet disappears over Assam skies

GUWAHATI

A Su-30 fighter aircraft of Indian Air Force (IAF) went missing soon after it took off from Jorhat airbase in eastern Assam on Thursday evening, which reportedly crashed in neighbouring hilly Karbi Anglong district.

Sources in IAF headquarters in New Delhi said the aircraft lost contact soon after take off from Jorhat at 7.42pm. Search and rescue mission has been initiated, they said adding that further details are being ascertained.

Sources in Karbi Anglong district said local residents observed a massive fire following a huge sound on an interior hills area near Chokihola under Bokajan sub-division.

The district administration, however, could not confirm the reports about crash of the aircraft. "We have rushed a team to the site and are awaiting response," Karbi Anglong District Commissioner, Aranyak Saikia, told DH over phone at around 9.45pm.

QUICK READ

'India's progress an economic miracle'

NEW DELHI: Visiting Finland President Alexander Stubb on Thursday praised India's economic growth, democratic values, and strategic importance to Europe. "We should all become a little bit more Indian," he said during a joint briefing with Modi.

Khalistani-critic stabbed to death in Canada

OTTAWA: A Canada-based social media influencer of Punjabi origin, Nancy Grewal, known for openly expressing her views on social, religious and political issues related to Punjab, was murdered in Windsor, police said. Authorities suspect extremist involvement in the killing. According to police, the 45-year-old was stabbed to death at her home around 9.30 pm on Tuesday. The police confirmed her death a day later. Grewal, a social media influencer and YouTuber, had frequently posted videos criticising Khalistani activities, including statements made by extremist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. Police said they have launched an investigation into the murder and are working to identify the suspect.

More on page 9

FREEBIES OR FINANCIAL BURDEN?

Siddu set for his record 17th Budget today

BENGALURU

The Budget Session of the Karnataka Legislature begins Friday, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presenting the 2026–27 Budget—his 17th as finance minister and a record. His presentation comes amid speculation of a possible leadership change after the session due to an alleged power-sharing arrangement with Deputy CM D. K. Shivakumar.

Siddaramaiah faces a tight fiscal situation, balancing revenue deficit control with funding five guarantee schemes—Shakti, Gruha Lakshmi, Gruha Jyoti, Yuva Nidhi, and Anna Bhagya—whose annual cost exceeds ₹50,000 crore. The government also plans to recruit over 56,000 employees while dealing with an estimated ₹18,000-crore revenue shortfall in 2025-26.

Opposition leader R Ashoka blasted the government, alleging borrowing of ₹1.15 lakh crore and possible tax hikes. The opposition is also expected to raise issues such as SC reservation, alleged diversion of SCSP/TSP funds, KPSC exam irregularities, development concerns, irrigation projects, and law-and-order issues during the session.

QUICK READ

Maha Rudraksha Exhibition and Sales Fair in Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Hyderabad-based Indus-Nepal Rudraksha Institute has organised a Maha Rudraksha exhibition and sales fair at Hotel Le Folie, which will continue until March 9. The fair features a variety of Nepalese Rudrakshas along with rare gemstones. Among the highlights is the world's rare round-faced single-faced Rudraksha, valued at around ₹4.5 lakh. Director Narendra Kashireddy said visitors will be guided on selecting suitable Rudrakshas based on their birth sign and birth star using Vedic mathematics. The fair will also educate people on identifying genuine and fake Rudrakshas. The exhibition is open daily from 10.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. and is open to all visitors.

34 International Flights Cancelled Amid West Asia Tensions

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Amid continuing tensions in West Asia, 34 international flights arriving and departing from Kempegowda International Airport have been cancelled, affecting passenger travel. According to Bengaluru International Airport Limited, 18 incoming flights and 16 outgoing flights were cancelled. The disruptions have impacted routes connecting Bengaluru with major West Asian destinations including Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dubai and Doha. Airport authorities have opened a help desk outside Terminal 2 to assist affected passengers and provide information regarding rescheduling and alternative arrangements.

KERC Approves Electricity Tariff Hike for Commercial, Industrial Users

Despite protests, the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission has increased tariffs for commercial and industrial users

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

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KARNATAKA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
16C-1, Miller Tank Bed Area Vasantha Nagar, Bengaluru-560052

The Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) has approved revised electricity tariffs for the financial year 2025–26, with the new rates set to take effect from April. Despite earlier indications that there would be no increase, the Commission has raised tariffs for commercial and industrial consumers, drawing sharp criticism from trade bodies and political leaders.

Under the revised tariff structure, higher fuel and demand charges have been imposed on commercial and industrial categories including LT-3A, HT-2B, LT-5 and HT-2A. These categories cover a wide range of establishments such as shops, manufacturing units, MSMEs, IT and technology parks, theatres, hotels and other commercial enterprises.

For LT-3A commercial consumers, the tariff has been increased from ₹7 to ₹7.10 per unit, along with a fixed charge of ₹235 per kilowatt. Industrial consumers under the LT-5 category will now pay ₹5.20 per unit, up from ₹4.50, with a fixed charge of ₹165 per horsepower.

Similarly, HT-2A industrial users will pay ₹6.70 per unit, slightly higher than the previous ₹6.60, with a demand charge of ₹365 per kVA. The most significant increase has been seen in the HT-2B commercial category, which includes complexes, cinemas and hotels. The tariff for this category has risen sharply from ₹5.95 to ₹6.90 per unit, with a demand charge of ₹390 per kVA.

The proposed tariff revision had faced strong opposition during a public hearing held on February 20. Industry representatives had argued that the Commission had earlier suggested that tariffs would not be increased, and the final decision has now angered several trade and industry associations.

Officials said the tariff revision was primarily driven by financial pressures faced by the State's electricity distribution companies. The five electricity supply companies, or ESCOMs, reported a combined revenue shortfall of about ₹4,620 crore in the previous financial year and had urged the Commission to allow a tariff revision to bridge the gap.

The State government has also been providing subsidies for free electricity to agricultural pump sets. While ₹16,021 crore was allocated for the scheme, the actual requirement was estimated at ₹20,640 crore. Despite the additional subsidy support, the Commission has permitted the recovery of the remaining gap from commercial and industrial consumers.

However, the free electricity scheme for agricultural pump sets up to 10 horsepower will continue. Additionally, the per-unit rate in certain categories has been reduced from ₹8.30 to between ₹6.57 and ₹7.79.

Move to Online System for Civic Records from Next Financial Year: Rao

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Implementation of upgraded technology will help authorities track the progress of civic projects more efficiently.

Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to upgrade the existing manual register system to a fully online system from the upcoming financial year within the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru West City Corporation.

During a visit to the RR Nagar Zonal Office on Thursday, Rao inspected register books related to job codes and technical approvals. Noting that records were still being maintained manually, he instructed officials to transition to a digital system starting next financial year to improve transparency and efficiency in administration.

Officials said the move would help streamline record-keeping and enable better monitoring of development works. With the introduction of the online system, authorities will be able to track the progress of civic projects more effectively and maintain real-time records.

During the inspection, Rao also reviewed infrastructure facilities at the zonal office. Additional office spaces are currently being constructed on the third floor of the RR Nagar Zonal Office building. He directed officials to complete the construction work at the earliest to ensure better functioning of the office.

The Chief Commissioner further stressed the importance of maintaining cleanliness within the office premises. He instructed staff to ensure that the surroundings are kept neat and organised so that the office environment remains professional and accessible to the public.

While inspecting the meeting hall at the zonal office, Rao suggested undertaking renovation work to upgrade the facility. He also directed officials to remove storage cabinets and boxes placed along the corridors to improve space management and maintain order within the building.

Later, Rao inspected ongoing road works in the western part of the city. He reviewed the asphalting work being carried out on Shankar Mutt Road in Mahalakshmi Layout and also examined traffic conditions at Shankar Mutt Circle. He instructed officials to provide a free left turn from Modi Hospital Road towards Basaveshwara Main Road and from Kurubarahalli Road towards Shankar Mutt Road. He also asked officials to prepare a comprehensive design for the development of the circle with the help of urban planners.

Rao also inspected the white-topping work on Dr. Rajkumar Road. Officials informed him that work on a 700-metre stretch between Navrang Theatre and Rajajinagar 10th Cross is progressing, with one section already opened for vehicular movement. The remaining portion is expected to be completed by March 31.

Additional Commissioner (Development) Digvijay Bodke, Joint Commissioner Aarthi Anand, Chief Engineers Swayamprabha and Dr. Raghavendra Prasad, along with other officials, were present during the inspection.

CMIDP Works Must Be Completed on Priority, Says Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Additional Commissioner of the Bengaluru East City Corporation, Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar, inspected several ongoing road and drainage works within the corporation limits and directed officials to complete projects under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Programme (CMIDP) on priority.

During the inspection, the Additional Commissioner reviewed the comprehensive road development and drain desilting works being carried out under CMIDP funding along Chroma Road. The stretch from the Outer Ring Road to the Panathur Railway Track was examined, and officials were instructed to ensure smooth flow of rainwater and begin asphalt works at the earliest. Authorities have set a target of completing the project within the next two to three months.

Officials were also directed to repair and maintain around 6.5 kilometres of footpaths along the stretch from Marathahalli Bridge to Ibbaluru Junction on Outer Ring Road. Emphasising pedestrian safety, the Additional Commissioner instructed that footpaths must be obstruction-free and properly maintained to provide safe and walkable facilities for the public.

The team also inspected the completed road development works on Sarjapur Road to verify quality standards. Officials were told that if any damage occurs during the Defect Liability Period (DLP), the concerned contractor must immediately carry out repairs.

Following complaints received during a public grievance meeting regarding a narrow road and drainage issues near Jeevika Hospital in Doddanekkundi, the Additional Commissioner conducted a site visit. Engineers were instructed to verify the road width, assess the feasibility of constructing a side drain and submit a detailed technical report.

Reiterating the civic body's commitment to improving infrastructure, the Additional Commissioner said the corporation would accelerate development works to ensure smoother traffic movement and better civic amenities for residents.

HC Quashes Case Against Nalapad Harris Over Protest

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has quashed the criminal case registered against Congress leader Mohammed Nalapad Harris for allegedly disrupting train services during a protest at Whitefield Railway Station in 2022. A bench headed by Justice M. Nagaprasanna allowed the petition filed by Nalapad challenging the case and the trial court proceedings. The court observed that the allegations made against the petitioner did not attract the provisions under Sections 154(C), 147, 154 and 174(A) of the Railway Act. The bench noted that there was insufficient material to justify prosecution under the cited sections. It further stated that the trial court had taken cognisance of the case without properly exercising discretion, and therefore the proceedings against the petitioner could not be sustained in law.

Lokayukta raids; officers wait 2 hrs to enter Hassan official's house

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka Lokayukta carried out early morning raids at the residences and offices of several government officials across eight districts on Thursday following allegations of possessing disproportionate assets and corruption.

Simultaneous searches were conducted in Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mandya, Bagalkot, Dharwad, Hassan, Vijayapura and Yadgir districts. Teams of Lokayukta officials inspected properties linked to officers from various departments, including public works, electricity, water supply and welfare departments.

Among those whose premises were searched were R. Shashidhar, Chief Executive Officer of Raitha Seva Sahakari Bank in Yelahanka village, H.C. Indresh, Assistant Professor at Hebbal Veterinary College, and KRIDL Chief Engineer Vasant V. Naik. Raids were also conducted at locations linked to Viresh Hiremath, Deputy Electrical Inspector of the Electrical Department in Yadgir; S. Satish, Assistant Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department in Mandya; M.K. Surakoda, Backward Classes Welfare Department taluk officer in Dharwad; Ashif Iqbal, Assistant Executive Engineer and in-charge Executive Engineer of the Mysuru Water Board; and P.G. Prakash, Junior Engineer of the Krishnabhagya Jal Nigam in Vijayapura.

A dramatic situation unfolded in Hassan when officials attempted to search the residence of M.C. Satyanarayana, an Assistant Executive Engineer of the city corporation. Officers led by Lokayukta DySP Suresh Kumar and Inspector Shilpa reached his house in Vidyanagar around 5.15 a.m., but the doors remained locked and the lights inside were switched off.

Despite repeated knocks and calls, there was no response from inside. Officials reportedly climbed onto the building and knocked on the windows, asking the occupant to open the door. The team waited outside the house for more than two hours before additional personnel from the K.R. Puram police station arrived at the spot.

After being asked to stand before the CCTV camera and open the door, Satyanarayana finally opened it, allowing the Lokayukta team to enter and conduct the inspection.

Lokayukta Superintendent of Police Nandini also visited the site briefly to monitor the situation.

Article 22 Protection Applies to Foreign Nationals in India: HC

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has held that the constitutional protection guaranteed under Article 22 of the Constitution of India is not limited to Indian citizens but extends to all persons within the territory of India, including foreign nationals. Justice M. Nagaprasanna made the observation while granting relief to two Nigerian nationals who had challenged their arrest under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. The court emphasised that Article 22(1) mandates that every person arrested must be informed of the grounds of arrest and that this requirement is a mandatory constitutional safeguard rather than a mere procedural formality.

The court observed that the law does not prescribe a rigid format for communicating the grounds of arrest. Substantial compliance is considered sufficient, provided the arrested person is made aware of the reasons for the arrest. However, the judge noted that in the present case, the authorities had failed to comply with the legal requirements laid down by the Supreme Court of India regarding the communication of arrest grounds.

The petitioners, Emeka James Iwoba and Uderike Fidelis, had approached the High Court seeking a declaration that their arrest was illegal. They argued that they were not informed of the grounds of arrest and were also not produced before a magistrate within 24 hours, as required by law.

Cases Filed over Protests after Khamenei's Death: G. Parameshwara

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

G. Parameshwara, Karnataka's Home Minister, said cases have been registered against those who staged protests in the city following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Speaking to reporters near his residence in Sadashivanagar, Mr. Parameshwara said a small group of people viewed Khamenei as a spiritual leader and may have felt grief at his passing. However, he emphasised that any form of protest must comply with the laws of the country.

"People may express their sentiments, but demonstrations must be conducted within the legal framework. In this case, no permission was sought from the authorities and the protest was held without prior approval. The police have already registered cases against those involved," he said. He added that such protests would not be permitted in the coming days without proper authorisation.

The Minister reiterated that court directions regarding public demonstrations must be followed strictly. He noted that protests in Bengaluru are permitted only at designated venues such as Freedom Park. "Everyone must respect court orders. The court has clearly directed that protests should be held at Freedom Park, and we are following that rule," he said, adding that action had been initiated regarding the recent protest.

Responding to questions about a dinner meeting invitation from Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, Mr. Parameshwara said there was nothing unusual about it. He remarked that leading the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee for six years was not an easy task and appreciated Mr. Shivakumar's efforts.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTED

Civic Body Deploys ₹65-L Machine to Vacuum Roadside Waste

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bengaluru North City Corporation has introduced a truck-mounted litter-picking machine worth ₹65 lakh to clear dry waste from roadsides, vacant sites and hard-to-reach areas across its jurisdiction.

The newly procured equipment is designed to suck dry waste such as leaves, paper and plastic into a vacuum chamber mounted on the truck. With a capacity of 5,000 litres, the machine can efficiently collect garbage from locations where sanitation workers often find it difficult to reach.

According to BNCC Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar, the civic body decided to procure the machine after observing its successful use by the Tumakuru City Municipal Corporation.

"We procured a similar model and customised it according to our requirements by widening the suction hose. The machine will initially be used on a pilot basis," he said.

Officials said the equipment will help speed up waste collection and reduce manual labour, especially in areas where large quantities of dry waste accumulate along roadsides.

The corporation has currently purchased only one such machine at a cost of ₹65 lakh. However, officials indicated that there are plans to procure smaller versions of the litter-picking machines if the pilot project proves effective.

Meanwhile, Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, has reportedly asked officials to prepare a proposal to explore the possibility of deploying similar machines across other parts of the city.

BNCC Deputy General Manager Rashmi N said the vacuum system can also be used to remove dry waste from roadside drains, helping prevent blockages during the rainy season.

Despite the new technology, some citizens remain cautious about its performance in Indian conditions. Mahesh Readdy, a waste management activist, said such machines are efficient in clearing leaves and light dry waste but may face problems if they encounter heavier objects like coconut shells, beer bottles or binding wires commonly found on city streets.

He pointed out that similar pilot projects carried out earlier in Mumbai and Telangana had faced maintenance issues, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.

QUICK READ

Drivers Seva Trust Logo Released at Freedom Park Event

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Drivers Seva Trust was formally inaugurated with the release of its logo at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Thursday. The logo was unveiled by actor and producer Gandasi Sadananda Swamy. Speaking at the event, Trust president Sanchari Satish said the organisation aims to support drivers through various welfare initiatives. These include providing free buttermilk, tea, coffee and meals, along with other continuous assistance programmes for drivers working across the city. Social worker K. M. Nataraj and Trust director Mohan Kumari were present on the occasion.

Ambedkar Confined Within Caste Lens by Followers: Belawadi

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Theatre artist Prakash Belawadi said B. R. Ambedkar has been "imprisoned within casteism" by his own followers and should instead be understood in a broader social and economic context. He was speaking after launching the book Nanu Kafira, written by Sudhakar Hosahalli, at a programme organised by Swarashtra Prakashan on Thursday. Belawadi said society has failed the ideals of Ambedkar and Basavanna despite invoking them in the name of caste annihilation. He urged people to study Ambedkar holistically, including his views on economy, linguistic regions and governance.

Bengaluru family of five killed in NH 69 accident

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a tragic road accident reported from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, five members of a family from Bengaluru were killed as a canter hit their car from behind on the National Highway 69 on Thursday morning.

The deceased are identified as Mohandas (70), Nagaraj (60), Kusuma (60), Jayanthi (59) and Pooja (33), who were residents of Rajajinagar in Bengaluru. The family was reportedly returning from a trip to Tirupati when the accident occurred.

The canter is said to have hit the car on the Tirupati-Palamaneru stretch of NH 69 near the YSR Junction in Gangavaram hobli, Palamaneru taluk.

BMTC pushes beyond 25 km limit, launches AC 'Vajra Vistara' services

BMTC extends premium AC services to satellite towns beyond earlier 25km limit

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), long regarded as the lifeline of urban commuting in Bengaluru, has expanded its operational reach beyond its traditional 25-km limit from the city boundaries by launching premium air-conditioned bus services to satellite towns up to 40 km away.

Under a new brand called Vajra Vistara, BMTC has introduced AC bus services connecting Bengaluru with the towns of Ramanagara and Kanakapura. The initiative marks a significant expansion of the corporation's jurisdiction beyond the Greater Bengaluru Area and signals a shift in the city transport utility's approach toward regional connectivity.

State Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy formally flagged off the services at the Ramanagara bus stand. BMTC has initially deployed 14 air-conditioned buses across the two routes. Officials said the buses will operate as express services with limited halts to ensure faster travel times for commuters travelling between Bengaluru and the satellite towns.

The Majestic–Ramanagara route will have six stops and a fare of ₹95. Five of these stops are located between Majestic and the NICE Road Junction. Once the bus enters the Bengaluru–Mysuru access-controlled highway, it will travel nearly 35 kilometres without halting before reaching Ramanagara, significantly cutting travel time.

BMTC officials clarified that the services have been strategically positioned in the premium AC category to avoid direct competition with the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), which operates a large number of non-AC buses along the same corridor connecting Bengaluru to Ramanagara and further destinations such as Mysuru. "KSRTC already runs several non-AC buses on this route. Introducing similar services from BMTC would not make sense. However, there is increasing demand for comfortable air-conditioned travel," a senior BMTC official said.

The corporation is also optimistic about the Banashankari TTMC–Kanakapura route, where the fare for a 50-km journey has been fixed at ₹90. The route will have seven stops including Kaggalipura, Harohalli, Dayananda Sagar College and Jain University Gate. Officials pointed out that hundreds of people commute daily between Kanakapura and Bengaluru for work. Unlike other satellite towns around the city, Kanakapura does not have a railway connection, making road transport the primary option for commuters. The new service is expected to integrate well with the city's metro network operated by Namma Metro, with convenient stops near Banashankari, Konanakunte Cross, Talaghattapura and Silk Institute Metro stations. BMTC officials said future route expansion will be planned through joint surveys with KSRTC, and the corporation may also introduce AC electric buses on these longer inter-city routes in the coming years.

Surprise police checks in Bengaluru institutions find 31 students using drugs

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Police conducted a surprise inspection of educational institutions and hostels in Bengaluru West division and said that students who have consumed drugs will be subjected to counselling.

In a coordinated drive against drug abuse, the Karnataka State Police carried out surprise inspections at six educational institutions and two student hostels in the western division of Bengaluru on Thursday.

During the operation, police teams collected samples from around 1,200 students after obtaining permission from the management of the institutions and hostels. Out of these, 585 samples were randomly tested for drug consumption. The tests confirmed that 31 students had consumed drugs.

Officials said the initiative was part of an awareness programme aimed at curbing drug abuse among young people and identifying those who require help to overcome addiction. Instead of initiating immediate legal action, authorities said the focus would be on rehabilitation and counselling. The police will extend assistance to parents through the 'Sanmitra' programme, which has been designed to help students overcome drug dependency. Under the programme, students identified as drug users will undergo counselling sessions, and their families will be guided on how to support them in the recovery process. Hospital staff and doctors from several healthcare institutions including Punya Hospital, Padmadevayya Hospital, Kade Hospital, Sharavathi Hospital, Sri Lakshmi Multi Speciality Hospital and Kangaroo Care Hospital assisted the police during the screening and testing process. Authorities also interacted with college managements to explain the harmful consequences of drug consumption and the need for preventive measures within campuses. Dr. M. A. Saleem said the 'Sanmitra' project has been launched by the police department to help drug users break free from addiction. The initiative aims to identify the causes behind drug use among students and trace how narcotic substances are reaching them.

> **"We will counsel such students and make efforts to free them from addiction. Police will monitor them continuously while ensuring their privacy is protected,".**
>
> —Dr. Saleem,

Inspections across colleges and hostels detect drug use among students; counselling planned.

Bengaluru publisher Nigel Fernandes honoured with rare Papal knighthood

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Nigel Fernandes, CEO of ATC Publishers, has been conferred the papal title of Knight of the Order of St. Sylvester, one of the highest honours awarded by the Catholic Church to laypersons, recognising his decades of service to the Church and society.

Fernandes received the rare honour for his 32 years of dedicated contribution to Catholic publishing and Church activities. A felicitation ceremony was held at Ascension Church in Bengaluru, organised by Navajyothi Publications and well-wishers. The event was attended by bishops, priests, nuns, government officials and members of the laity.

Archbishop of Bengaluru, Most Rev. Dr Peter Machado, said the archdiocese was proud of the recognition bestowed on Fernandes. He praised his humility, generosity and commitment to helping those in need. The Archbishop also highlighted Fernandes' significant contributions to publishing important Church texts, including the New Living Translation (Catholic Edition), the English Standard Version (Catholic Edition) and the Lectionary, among several other religious publications.

Archbishop Emeritus Bernard Moras described the papal knighthood as a rare recognition directly from the Pope, symbolising honour from the highest authority of the Catholic Church. Recalling his long association with ATC Publishers since 1964, he shared personal experiences of working with Fernandes and praised his dedication to the mission of the Church.

During the programme, both archbishops presented a citation to Fernandes and released a souvenir titled Steward of Sacred Texts, which chronicles his life journey and contributions to religious publishing.

Responding to the honour, Chevalier Nigel Fernandes compared his life to a chessboard, where every move is guided by faith and support from others. He acknowledged the encouragement and guidance of several Church leaders, including Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, former Archbishop Ignatius Pinto, Biblical scholar Rev. Dr Lucien Legrand and CCBI Deputy Secretary General Fr Stephen Alathara.

Fernandes said the award was not the end of a journey but a call for greater responsibility and commitment.

The knighthood was formally conferred earlier at the 37th Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India in Bengaluru by Apostolic Nuncio to India Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli in the presence of senior Church leaders.

Techie dies by suicide; husband held for dowry death

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 35-year-old former software engineer allegedly died by suicide at her residence in Soladevanahalli following repeated domestic disputes and alleged dowry harassment. Based on a complaint filed by her father, police have arrested her husband on charges of dowry death.

The deceased, P. Sushma, had been married to Puneet Kumar, an employee in a private company, for five years. The couple has a four-year-old son. According to the complaint filed by her father, T.D. Prabhakaramurthy, a retired Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police, the family had given ₹10 lakh in cash and gold ornaments as dowry during the wedding. He also stated that Sushma had purchased a car with her own earnings when she was working as a software engineer before quitting her job a few years ago.

Prabhakaramurthy alleged that despite this, Puneet Kumar and his mother Kalpana continued to demand additional dowry and frequently harassed Sushma.

Parents urge Karnataka government to regulate arbitrary fee hikes in private schools

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

With the new academic year approaching, parents across Karnataka have renewed their demand for government intervention to regulate frequent and arbitrary fee hikes by private schools. Parent groups say the rising cost of education is placing a heavy burden on families already struggling with inflation and an uncertain job market.

Private schools in the State are reportedly planning an annual revision of tuition fees ranging between 5% and 8%. However, many parents fear that the increase could be higher when additional charges such as transport, extracurricular activities and development fees are included.

Parent associations say several schools have raised fees by as much as 15% in recent years, taking advantage of the lack of a clear regulatory framework. They have urged the State government to introduce a transparent law to regulate school fees and prevent arbitrary hikes.

Activists and parents have pointed to the model proposed by the Delhi Government under the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Act, 2025, where a committee recommends fee revisions and both school management and parents participate in the decision-making process.

Karnataka has nearly 19,000 private schools, and parents argue that the absence of strict regulation has allowed many institutions to increase fees without proper justification.

Despite repeated demands, officials in the School Education Department have so far remained non-committal on introducing such a framework.

Action taken to ensure smooth flow of rainwater, says S.T. Somashekar

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

MLA S. T. Somashekar said that priority is being given to strengthening stormwater infrastructure in rural areas to ensure smooth flow of rainwater and prevent flooding during the monsoon.

He was speaking after launching the construction of barrier walls along rajakaluves near OB Chudahalli and Muneshwara temples and the Government Health Centre in Kaggalipur Gram Panchayat limits of the Yeshwantpur Assembly constituency.

Somashekar said that improving basic civic infrastructure in rural areas is essential for the overall development of villages. Providing facilities such as drinking water systems, proper drainage networks, road development and asphalting will help ensure that rainwater flows smoothly through rajakaluves during the rainy season without affecting nearby houses and roads.

He added that several development works have already been initiated across 17 Gram Panchayat limits in the constituency and that the projects are being implemented with an emphasis on quality. According to him, systematic development of villages will ultimately contribute to the growth of the entire region and the country.

The MLA also instructed officials and local representatives to closely monitor the progress of the works so that they are completed on time and benefit residents.

KEY REFORMS CLEARED

Cabinet clears key transport, irrigation and governance reforms

CH NEWS,BENGALURU

After the seventh Cabinet meeting of 2026 chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs H.K. Patil addressed the media at Vidhana Soudha and outlined key decisions taken by the government.

The Cabinet granted administrative approval for the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) to purchase 144 BS6 diesel city buses at an estimated cost of ₹62 crore to strengthen public transport services.

In the irrigation sector, the Cabinet approved development works of distributary canals, including the Girija temple, RBLL and Bangara Doddi canals in Srirangapatna taluk of Mandya district at a cost of ₹60 crore. Rehabilitation works for four bridge-cum-barrages across the Manjara river in Bidar district — Jeeragyala, Manikeshwara, Chandapur and Halahalli — were also cleared at an estimated cost of ₹151.70 crore.

The Cabinet approved amendments to the Karnataka Municipalities Act, 1964 and the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976 to enhance the financial independence of urban local bodies. The amendments aim to introduce market-based fees for advertisement approvals and licence renewals, replacing the earlier fee structure.

Approval was also granted to register an absolute sale deed for a BDA site in Banashankari 6th Stage in favour of Smt. Shailaja, wife of late MLA Shivanand Rudrappa Ambadagatti.

On internal reservation for Scheduled Castes, Patil said the government remains committed and a special Cabinet meeting will be convened soon. The Cabinet also approved ₹227.58 crore for hardware and software procurement under the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System for police modernisation and directed the Health Minister to initiate talks with protesting doctors to resolve the ongoing strike.

Domestic help hired 10 days ago flees with gold, cash worth ₹23 lakh

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A domestic help-cum-cook, hired barely 10 days ago at a businessman's residence, allegedly fled with gold ornaments and cash worth more than ₹23 lakh from an apartment in Jakkasandra.

Police have registered a case and launched a search for the accused.

The accused, identified as Saroj, is a native of Bihar. According to the complaint filed by Meesha Paruthi, the incident took place between 6.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. on March 1 at his residence.

Paruthi told the police that he had been searching for a domestic help as his wife was unwell and required assistance with household chores.

He contacted Ranjith, a cook who had earlier worked at his residence, seeking help in finding a suitable person. Ranjith reportedly recommended Saroj, assuring the family that she was experienced in cooking and household work.

QUICK READ

Prof. Nagasudha R. earns Doctorate for research

Koppal

Prof. Nagasudha R., Head of Commerce at Seshadripuram Evening College and research scholar at University of Mysore, has been awarded a Ph.D. Her thesis, Role of Social Media Marketing and Performance of Women Enterprises, studied the impact of social media strategies on women-led businesses under guidance of Dr. Prakash B. Nayak of Kosish Institute of Management Studies. Praised for clear methodology and analysis, her work offers insights for policymaking and entrepreneurship development. Colleagues and students congratulated her achievement, noting it enhances institutional prestige and research legacy.

Three foreign women rescued

Hassan

Police rescued three foreign women from a lodge on the Bangalore-Mangalore Highway near Buvanahalli following allegations of prostitution. The Karavali Comfort Lodge was raided after Barangay Police Station received information about illegal activities. The operation was conducted jointly with activists from the Odanadi organization. One person has been detained for questioning, while several others fled the scene. Authorities are investigating claims that the women were brought from abroad for illegal purposes. A case has been registered at the Baradana Police Station, and the investigation is ongoing to track the remaining suspects.

Two killed as Tata Ace hits tree

Gadag

A tragic accident occurred near Harti in Gadag taluk when a Tata Ace goods vehicle returning from the Kamanna festival hit a tree. Two people, Muthappa Sutageri (35) and Ningappa Yelavathi (36), died on the spot, while eight others were injured. Two of the injured are in critical condition and have been shifted to KIMS Hospital, Hubballi. The victims and injured were from Hirekoppa village, and had attended the Gojanur Kamanna festival DJ procession. Police said the accident was due to driver negligence. A case has been registered at Gadag Rural Police Station.

MP Tukaram Urges Banks, Officials Coordinate Better

The MP urged officials and banks to coordinate effectively, ensuring welfare scheme benefits reach the poor and needy promptly

BALLARI

Member of Parliament E. Tukaram asked government and bank officials to work together to ensure that people receive the benefits of banking schemes launched by the Centre and the state government.

He spoke while presiding over the District Level Review Committee meeting of the district lead bank held at the Zilla Panchayat's old Abdul Nazir Saab Hall in Ballari on Thursday.

The MP expressed concern that a lack of coordination between officials and banks is affecting the success of several welfare schemes. He urged officers to work with a humanitarian approach and ensure that benefits reach the poor and needy without delay.

Tukaram said banks play an important role in helping poor families become financially independent. He asked bank officials to clear loan applications submitted by people within the stipulated time so that beneficiaries can start their activities and improve their livelihoods.

He also said timely financial support through banks will make government welfare schemes more effective and beneficial for the public. The MP advised officials to hold regular meetings to review pending loan applications and solve problems quickly.

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Mohammed Haris Sumer said banks should act as a backbone for common people. He reminded officials that loans are part of banking business and should be provided responsibly to eligible applicants.

He directed officers to ensure that loans and grants under priority sectors such as agriculture, education, housing, industry and social development are distributed before the end of March.

During the meeting, Tukaram also reviewed the progress of schemes such as PMEGP, PM SVANidhi and Udyogini Scheme. He also handed over two insurance cheques of ₹2 lakh each to beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.

Demand grows to divide Belagavi district at the earliest

BELAGAVI

Satish Jarkiholi suggested forming three districts for efficient administration; the Chief Minister considered it, but the final decision on district creation rests with the state government

Public Works Department Minister Satish Jarkiholi has said that all MLAs from Belagavi district have urged Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to divide the large district into smaller administrative units for better governance and easier administration.

Speaking to reporters in Chikkodi after hearing public grievances, the minister said the demand for a separate Chikkodi district has existed for many years. According to him, all MLAs from the district met the Chief Minister during the winter session of the Assembly held in Belagavi and requested him to consider creating smaller districts.

Satish Jarkiholi said he personally suggested forming three districts so that administration becomes more efficient and people can get government services faster. He added that the Chief Minister listened carefully to the request, and now the final decision rests with the state government. The minister also clarified that creating a new district is an administrative decision and does not necessarily have to be announced during the state budget.

The minister also spoke about water supply for farmers. He said that after requests from farmers, the government decided to continue releasing water from the Hidkal dam to the Chikkodi sub-canal until March 12. Earlier, the plan was to stop the water release on March 7. The extension will help farmers protect their rabi crops.

Earlier in the day, the minister inspected the construction of the new Lolsur bridge across the Ghataprabha river near Gokak. The bridge, being built at a cost of ₹30.21 crore, will replace an old British-era bridge that often gets submerged during floods and disrupts traffic.

He also visited the Morarji Desai Residential School in Ghataprabha, reviewed facilities, interacted with students, and encouraged them to work hard and follow their dreams in life.

Dr. Nagalakshmi Choudhary urged Siddaramaiah's budget to prioritize women's development, improving mother-child hospitals

Women seek strong support in state budget for healthcare

MANGALURU

Karnataka Women's Commission Chairperson Nagalakshmi Choudhary has expressed hope that the upcoming state budget will strongly focus on the welfare and safety of women across Karnataka.

Speaking to reporters during her district visit, Dr. Nagalakshmi Choudhary said the budget to be presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah should give priority to women's development. She said more mother and child hospitals are needed across the state and existing hospitals must have proper infrastructure, equipment and adequate doctors to serve women and children better.

She also said the Women's Commission has demanded more hostels for women, better safety measures and improved bus facilities, especially in backward districts where women face many difficulties in travel and accommodation.

Dr. Nagalakshmi Choudhary is currently touring different parts of the state to understand issues faced by women. She said this is her 26th district visit so far. During these visits, she interacts with women and students, spreads awareness about legal rights and collects information about problems faced by them. The commission will later submit a detailed report to the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary.

She added that Karnataka ranks first in the country in forming internal grievance committees at workplaces for women. Around 78,000 institutions have already uploaded information about forming such committees on the "She Box" portal. However, she stressed that these committees must work effectively and strict action should be taken whenever violence against women occurs. She also expressed concern over rising cases of sexual violence. According to her, misuse of smartphones, drugs and alcohol are among the factors contributing to such crimes. She stressed that society must promote humanity above caste and religion to prevent such incidents.

Gadag wildlife case: Vehicle owners summoned

GADAG

In the Gadag Forest Division Mundaragi Zone wildlife case, Zonal Forest Officers have issued notices to the owners of a Pulsar 150 cc bike and a Platina 100 cc bike, seeking a written explanation on why the vehicles should not be confiscated under the Karnataka Wildlife Act. On the day the notices were served, the vehicle owners claimed verbally that they had sold the vehicles, but they have not appeared for the hearing so far. The final hearing is scheduled for March 12, from 11 am to 1 pm at the Deputy Conservator of Forests office, Gadag Binkadakatti. Authorities have warned that if the vehicle owners fail to appear, it will be assumed they are not interested in participating, and the vehicles will be confiscated by the government, according to the Gadag Divi.

Lokayukta team struggles to enter Satyanarayana home

HASSAN

In a dramatic incident on Thursday morning, Lokayukta officials faced a four-hour stand-off at the residence of Mahanagara Palike Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) M.C. Satyanarayana in Hassan. The officials arrived around 5 a.m. to conduct a raid, but Satyanarayana did not open the door despite repeated requests.

Lokayukta personnel waited outside, attempting multiple ways to gain entry, including calling from outside, trying the car shed door, and even attempting to access the house from the balcony. A relative of Satyanarayana came to the spot and knocked, but no one responded from inside. As the hours passed, police arrived and used a Bluetooth speaker to communicate instructions to the occupants.

Finally, after four hours, the Satyanarayana family opened the door, allowing officials to begin checking documents and properties. Lokayukta SP Nandini inspected the scene, reviewed the situation, and gave instructions for further steps. The ongoing investigation involves examining multiple documents and gathering additional information.

The prolonged refusal to open the door has raised concerns and suspicions about the conduct of the AEE and the family. Authorities have not disclosed details of the findings yet, but the incident has attracted widespread attention due to the unusual delay and resistance during a Lokayukta operation.

Officials continue their work to collect evidence and ensure proper follow-up in the case, signaling that the investigation is far from over.

Folklore teaches values beyond bathing in streams

MANDYA

Karnataka State Artists Council President Dr. Sabbanahalli Raju emphasized the wisdom of ancestors, saying that bathing in a stream with impure thoughts does not erase one's sins. He made the remarks while inaugurating the program 'Folklore Memory for Young Minds' at Government High School, Santekasalagere, organized by the Shivaganga Cultural Youth Association, Kannada and Culture Department, and District Youth Council.

Dr. Raju highlighted the importance of preserving folklore, noting that villagers have passed down sacred words and stories through songs and performances. He also mentioned that scholars and PhD students are increasingly taking an interest in folklore studies, reflecting its enduring cultural significance.

International smooth music singer Shankar Bharathipura addressed the gathering, explaining that folk songs, customs, festivals, and traditions serve as a bridge between generations. He pointed out that many lullabies and folk songs still resonate today, showing the timeless nature of these oral traditions.

Artists from across Mandya district, including Haniyambadi Shekhar, Ramachandra Kunigal, S. Rajanna, Yarahalli Honnesh, Mahadevu, Devaraju Koppa, and Sabbanahalli Kumar, performed folk songs, delighting the audience.

The event was attended by Environmental Organization President Mangala M. Yogish, SDMC President Lakshmiranna, Headmaster Nasir Hussain SK, and Shivaganga Cultural Youth Association President Santhekasalagere Basavaraju.

District level job fair in Belagavi on Mar-7

BELAGAVI

A district-level job fair will be held on March 7 at S.G. Balekundri Technical College in Shivabasava Nagar from 10 am to 5 pm, according to Rahul Shinde, Chief Executive Officer of the Belagavi Zilla Panchayat.

In a press release, Shinde said the job fair is being organised jointly by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (Sanjeevini KSLRPS), Skill Development Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Department, Karnataka Skill Development Corporation, District Skill Mission, District Employment Exchange Office and Sri Siddarameshwara Education Institute.

The fair will be inaugurated by Public Works and District In-charge Minister Satish Jarkiholi. Minister for Women and Child Development Lakshmi Hebbalkar will also attend the event, while Belagavi North MLA Asif Sait will preside over the programme. Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Sharan Prakash Patil will participate as the chief guest.

More than 100 companies from Belagavi, Hubballi and Bengaluru are expected to take part in the job fair. Companies from different sectors will offer employment opportunities to qualified candidates.

Rahul Shinde appealed to young men and women of the district to participate in large numbers and make use of the opportunity. Candidates who have completed SSLC, PUC, ITI, Diploma, undergraduate degrees, postgraduate studies and other courses can attend.

SNEHAMAYI KRISHNA VOWS TRUTH IN SAUJANYA CASE

MYSURU

Social activist Snehamayi Krishna has vowed to reveal the truth behind the Saujanya rape-murder case if the government orders a formal investigation. Speaking publicly, Krishna challenged critics, including Girish Mattannavar, who accused her of making false claims, saying she will identify those responsible for Saujanya's death.

In a detailed Facebook post, Krishna responded to Mattannavar, who claimed to be a pro-Saujanya activist but, according to her, has failed to achieve justice for 13 years. She said her actions are backed by results, citing that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah returned 14 plots worth Rs 60 crore previously acquired in his family's name after her complaint. She also highlighted the temporary attachment of Rs 460 crore worth of assets by the Enforcement Directorate and the judicial custody of former MUD Commissioner G.T. Dinesh Kumar for around 70 days—all within a year and a half since her complaint.

Krishna clarified that her earlier apology for mentioning Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh does not undermine her credibility. She emphasized that her work is evidence-based, contrasting it with those who make promises without results.

"Let the government order an investigation into the Saujanya case, and I will confirm who is responsible for her death," Krishna said, urging authorities to take decisive action.

MARAMMA DEVI REVIVAL

Hundred year old temple reopens amid festivities

MANDYA

The newly renovated temple of Goddess Sri Maramma Devi was inaugurated with religious rituals and celebrations in Holalu village, drawing devotees and villagers in large numbers.

The renovation and installation ceremony was organised by the Sri Maramma Devi Restoration and Installation Committee. The temple, believed to be nearly a hundred years old, has been restored with the support of local residents and devotees.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the guidance of priests from Sri Tandaveshwara Swamy Temple. Priests Pradeep Dixit and Manjunath Dixit conducted the sacred rituals. Special ceremonies such as Kalasa installation, Durga Deeparadhana, Vastu Homa and decorative rituals were performed as part of the programme.

On Thursday morning, a religious procession began from Sri Balamuri Ganapati Temple. Devotees carried holy water in a colourful procession accompanied by traditional pooja dances and devotional chants.

Several rituals including Pancha Durga Homa, Kumbabhishek, Abhishek, Mahamangalarati and Theertha Prasad distribution were conducted for the goddess. Devotees gathered in large numbers to witness the ceremonies and seek blessings.

Later, a community meal programme (Anna Santharpana) was organised for villagers and devotees.

Former vice-president of the State Vokkaliga Sangha H. L. Shivanna inaugurated the religious programme and praised the youth of the village for taking the initiative to renovate the historic temple.

Former MLA H. B. Ramu inaugurated the community meal programme and appreciated the efforts of the temple restoration committee and local youth.

QUICK READ

Live broadcast of Karnataka Budget at bus stations

Chitradurga

Chief Minister and Finance Minister Siddaramaiah will present the Karnataka state budget for 2026-27 on Friday, March 6. This will be his 17th budget presentation, setting a record for the most budget presentations by a Chief Minister in the state.

To make the budget accessible to the public, a live broadcast has been arranged at 230 government bus stations across Karnataka. Vrthy Solutions Limited, in collaboration with the Information and Public Relations Department, will stream the budget presentation on digital LED screens at these bus stations.

Daylight robbery at Durga Devi temple

Dharwad

In a startling incident, two youths broke into the Durga Devi temple at Mani Killa, Dharwad, on Wednesday afternoon and stole money from the temple hundi. The theft happened in broad daylight, alarming locals and devotees in the area. The incident falls under the jurisdiction of the Dharwad City Police, who have begun investigating the case and are trying to trace the culprits. Temple authorities urged people to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. No injuries were reported, but the theft has raised concerns over security at religious places in the city.

Right-Hand communities protest against reservation policy

Hunsur

Members of the Taluk Right-Hand (Holay) Communities Union marched from the Hunsur Nagar Urs statue to Samvidhan Circle on Thursday to protest against the current internal reservation system. The protesters formed a human chain at Samvidhan Circle and submitted a petition to the Sub-Divisional Officer's office through Tahsildar Yadhugirish.

During the protest, DSS youth leader Kirangaswamy demanded that internal reservation activities in education and employment for Scheduled Castes in Karnataka be paused until the internal reservation report is fully addressed. He called for revising roster points, filling vacant posts under old reservation rules, releasing the caste census, and providing scientific classification of reserved castes.

Budget hopes rise in DK Shivakumar district

Residents demand completion of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences campus, believing it will enhance education and create opportunities

RAMANAGARA

People of Bengaluru South District are eagerly waiting for the State budget to be presented on Friday by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Residents and farmers from the district, which is also the home district of Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar, have placed several hopes on the upcoming budget.

The Chief Minister is set to present his record 17th State budget. People of the district expect the government to announce major development projects that can improve infrastructure, agriculture, and employment opportunities in the region.

One of the key demands is the completion of the long-pending campus of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences. Residents believe the project will boost education and create new opportunities for students in the district.

Farmers have also demanded better support for silk and mango cultivation, which are the main crops grown in the district. They are requesting loan waivers, fair support prices, and the early opening of the modern silk market built near Channapatna. Although the market structure is ready, it has not yet started functioning.

Channapatna is famous across the country for its traditional wooden toys made from special wood. However, artisans say the industry lacks proper marketing and government support. They are hoping the budget will provide financial help and modern facilities to promote this unique craft.

Residents are also demanding a high-tech stadium in the district, especially in Channapatna, where there are very limited sports facilities for youth.

Tourism development is another major expectation. Popular destinations such as Sangama, Mekedatu and Savandurga need better infrastructure and promotion.

People are also waiting to see whether Bidadi will be declared an industrial or AI city to boost employment opportunities in the dis

Child protection policy must be strictly enforced

CHITRADURGA

Dr. Thippeswamy criticized ten years of poor policy implementation, urging all institutions, including private centers, to follow child safety rules and form a Child Protection Committee.

Member of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights Dr. K.T. Thippeswamy said that proper implementation of the Child Protection Policy is essential in all educational institutions to ensure the safety of children below 18 years.

He was speaking after inaugurating a one-day training workshop for principals of diploma, polytechnic, ITI and paramedical colleges at the Mini Hall of the Zilla Panchayat in Chitradurga on Thursday. The programme focused on the Karnataka State Child Protection Policy 2016 (Revised 2023) and child protection laws. It was organised jointly by the commission, district administration, Zilla Panchayat, the Department of Women and Child Development Karnataka and the District Child Protection Unit.

Dr. Thippeswamy said it is unfortunate that even after ten years of the policy's introduction, many institutions have not implemented it properly. He said the policy is meant to ensure safety for children under 18 and must be followed by all institutions.

He added that during visits to ITI, polytechnic and paramedical colleges across the state, it was found that several principals were unaware of the policy. He clarified that the rules apply not only to government schools but also to aided, unaided institutions and private tuition centres. Every institution must form a Child Protection Committee, he said. He noted that earlier the policy was limited to the education department, but now it has been expanded into a detailed circular involving 11 departments. Authorities and educational institutions must work together to prevent violence against children and provide them with a safe environment. Deputy Director K.H. Vijayakumar stressed that protecting children should be the top priority of institutions and committees must actively work to ensure student safety.

Job-oriented training for Yuvanidhi beneficiaries

CHITRADURGA

The District Skill Mission has initiated skill development training for 7,377 beneficiaries of the Yuvanidhi scheme who are currently receiving unemployment allowance, said District Commissioner T. Venkatesh.

He emphasized that the unemployment allowance is temporary assistance and not a lifelong source of income. To become self-reliant, beneficiaries need technical and professional skills, as educational qualifications alone are insufficient in today's competitive industry-driven environment.

Beneficiaries have been advised to register immediately on the department's portal https://skillmission.karnataka.gov.in/ and participate in free job-oriented trainings offered at Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITI), GTTC, and Rudset Training Centers.

Malur MLA Nanje Gowda criticized the seven-year delay in the Rs 43 crore water project; Minister Suresh demanded a report

Kolar Bescom engineer suspended over negligence

KOLAR

District in-charge Minister Byrathi Suresh expressed strong displeasure at officials for failing to address public concerns during a meeting at the Zilla Panchayat auditorium in Kolar on Thursday. The minister criticized the officials of the Rural Drinking Water Supply and BESCOM departments for their negligence. Malur MLA K.Y. Nanje Gowda raised concerns over a drinking water project, highlighting that despite Rs 43 crore being allocated for water supply from the Malur Markandeya dam, the people still had no access even after seven years. Minister Byrathi Suresh condemned the delay, pointing out that funds had been spent without results, and instructed Rural Drinking Water Supply Executive Officer Raghu to submit a full report within a week.

During the meeting, Kolar MLA Kothur Manjunath complained that Bescom engineer Gurappa of Vemagal village was unresponsive to calls. Acting swiftly, Minister Byrathi Suresh, with BESCOM MD Devaraj on the line, ordered the immediate suspension of Gurappa for negligence. The minister emphasized that such irresponsible behavior would not be tolerated in public service.

Officials present were reminded of their duty to citizens, and the minister warned that delays and negligence affecting essential services like water and electricity would face strict action. The swift suspension of the engineer sends a clear message that accountability and prompt service are priorities for the state government.

The meeting highlighted the importance of active coordination between departments to resolve public issues efficiently and ensure citizens receive timely services, especially in rural areas like Kolar.

Demand Rs 50,000 crore for water resources

CHITRADURGA

The Irrigation Implementation Struggle Committee has urged the Karnataka government to allocate at least Rs 50,000 crore to the Water Resources Department in the upcoming state budget and reserve Rs 4,000 crore for the Upper Bhadra River project.

Speaking at a press conference at the Journalists' House in Chitradurga on Thursday, committee leader Hampayanamalai said the state government must correct past mistakes and provide adequate funds for irrigation projects in the region.

He criticised leaders for failing to deliver on earlier promises related to the Upper Bhadra project and said farmers in the plains had been disappointed by delays and lack of funding. He urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to ensure proper allocation in the budget to support irrigation development.

According to the committee, the 2025–26 state budget allocated only Rs 250 crore for the Upper Bhadra project while expecting a grant of Rs 1,000 crore from the Centre. However, the central government had not approved the project or released the expected funds, which created confusion and disappointment among people in the region.

In the previous budget, a total of Rs 18,826 crore was allocated to the Water Resources Department. Out of this amount, funds were distributed among different irrigation corporations, including Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam, Cauvery Neeravari Nigam, Karnataka Neeravari Nigam and Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam.

The committee said the allocation for Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam also covers projects like Yettinahole and Upper Bhadra, leaving limited funds for actual project work.

Members pointed out that the total expenditure on the Upper Bhadra project had already crossed Rs 11,345 crore by January 2026, while pending bills stood at about Rs 1,896 crore by February.

Committee leaders demanded that the state government release sufficient funds to speed up irrigation work and support farmers. Several farmer leaders attended the press conference.

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY AT DURGA DEVI TEMPLE

DHARWAD

In a startling incident, two youths broke into the Durga Devi temple at Mani Killa, Dharwad, on Wednesday afternoon and stole money from the temple hundi. The theft happened in broad daylight, alarming locals and devotees in the area. The incident falls under the jurisdiction of the Dharwad City Police, who have begun investigating the case and are trying to trace the culprits. Temple authorities urged people to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. No injuries were reported, but the theft has raised concerns over security at religious places in the city.

Youth must build values for stronger India

MANDYA

Mandya: Youth should develop human and moral values, along with positive thinking, socially and politically, said Mandya University Vice Chancellor Prof. K. Shivachithappa during the inauguration of the district-level competition of the Developed India Youth Connection Program – Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2026.

Organized in collaboration with the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Mandya University, Mai Bharat Mandya, National Service Scheme, and Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, the program was launched at the Syndicate Hall of Mandya University with a traditional lamp lighting ceremony.

Prof. Shivachithappa urged the youth to enhance their knowledge based on the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. "Such programs help youth understand political processes, social responsibilities, and democratic values. Participating in these platforms allows them to discuss national issues, share opinions, and interact with policy experts," he said.

The initiative aims to prepare the youth to contribute toward making India a developed nation by 2047. He emphasized that young people should seize every opportunity to build leadership, policy-making, and democratic skills.

Om Prakash, Assistant Director of the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, encouraged youth to learn about fundamental rights and duties under the Constitution. "Knowledge of these rights helps youth stand strong in society," he said. Krishna Kumar, Mandya University Minister, highlighted the importance of determination in securing jobs, understanding constitutional duties, and empowering themselves. He added that youth should continuously develop knowledge about the Constitution and apply it in daily life. The program was attended by Mandya University National Service Scheme Program Coordinator Prof. M. B. Pramila, Prof. Chandra Shekhar, Prof. J. V. Venkata Ramana, Dr. Sharana Basappa, Dr. Rekha Jadhav, Nagendra Satish, and other dignitaries. The event marked a significant step in motivating the youth to embrace leadership, moral values, and civic responsibility in building a stronger India.

KONPUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

Konpur village celebrates tribal culture traditions

MOLAKALMOOR

Konpur village in Thammenahalli gram panchayat witnessed a vibrant display of tribal culture and traditions on Thursday with the inauguration of Sri Hirebommalingeshwara Swamy and Sri Maramma Deviganga Pooja. This cultural event drew devotees and villagers from across the region.

After a gap of 40 years, the sacred bullocks of Lord Bommalingeshwara Swamy started their journey from Marammanahalli in Kudligi taluk on Wednesday morning. They were taken to the Bommalingeshwara Swamy temple premises at Malleharavi village, where special rituals were performed.

On Thursday morning, the deity was carried in a grand bullock procession to Gangammanahalli. Along the way, devotees performed traditional tribal rituals, showcasing the rich heritage of the region. The procession continued through Nagasamudra Valley, Megala Valley, Bommadevarahalli, and Lower Valley before returning to Konpur in the evening.

Devotees from more than 20 villages in neighboring Andhra Pradesh, including Madenahalli and Kallem, joined the festivities. They performed Rudrabhishek, an ancient ritual of worship, in the evening, followed by devotional bhajans that echoed through the village.

The event highlighted the importance of preserving tribal traditions and provided a platform for younger generations to witness and participate in the unique cultural heritage of the taluk. Local organizers and community leaders expressed their pride in keeping these age-old customs alive for future generations.

HPV Vaccination Campaign in the District from March 11

BALLARI

District Collector Nagendra Prasad K. announced that a special HPV vaccination campaign to prevent cervical cancer will begin on March 11. He made the announcement while chairing a Task Force Committee meeting at the New District Administrative Building.

The campaign aims to vaccinate 14-year-old girls across the district with the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which helps prevent cervical cancer. About 20,000 girls in this age group are expected to receive the vaccine through government health centers and door-to-door visits. The campaign will run for three months, and officials aim to ensure that all eligible girls are vaccinated.

Zilla Panchayat CEO Mohammed Haris Sumer emphasized that cervical cancer is common among women and that the HPV vaccine plays a key role in prevention.

QUICK READ

Applications open for 8th class admissions

Haveri

Ramakrishna Vidyashala in Mysore has invited applications for 8th class admissions for the 2026-27 academic year. The school seeks talented boys from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and special categories. Only six students per district will be selected through a written test in Science, Mathematics, English, and reasoning, followed by a medical check-up and personal interview assessing sports, cultural, and literary achievements. Applicants must submit 6th and 7th class mark sheets and certificates. The entrance exam will be held on April 15 at 10 am at the school. Applications close on March 25.

Madiga leaders demand internal reservation for jobs

Nagendra warned against actions causing confusion in the Social Welfare Department and criticized Minister H. C. Mahadevappa for allegedly favoring a specific community in statements

HUNSUR

The Karnataka government should fill 56,432 vacant posts by following internal reservation rules, said Arakalavadi Nagendra, leader of the Madiga Horata Samiti.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Journalists' Association office in Hunsur, he said the government must fill the large number of vacancies without creating confusion about reservation rules. According to him, recruitment should be done based on internal reservation within the Scheduled Castes category.

Nagendra said the government had earlier planned to fill the posts based on the reservation pattern followed in 2022. However, he warned that any step that creates confusion in the Social Welfare Department should be avoided. He also criticised Social Welfare Minister H. C. Mahadevappa for allegedly making statements that favour a particular community.

He said internal reservation has already been approved and divided into three groups — A, B and C — and the Governor has also given consent. Therefore, the government must implement it properly while filling the vacant posts.

Nagendra explained that the Basavaraj Bommai government in 2022 had increased reservation by 2 percent for Scheduled Castes and 4 percent for Scheduled Tribes. Filling the posts based on this revised percentage may create legal complications, he said, and demanded that the earlier 15 percent reservation system should be followed while applying internal reservation.

He added that Scheduled Castes should receive 2 percent and Scheduled Tribes 4 percent reservation separately, and the remaining posts can be filled after the final court verdict.

Nagendra warned that protests will be held in Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Hassan and Mandya districts if the government fails to act. Leaders including Parashurama, P. K. Belthur Venkatesh and Shivaramu were present.

Farmers receive equipment under Ganga Kalyan scheme

BIDAR

Scheduled Tribe farmers in Bidar South constituency received irrigation equipment under the Ganga Kalyan Scheme, distributed by MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale at his office in Bidar city. The equipment included motors, pump sets, and other necessary tools for setting up borewells, aimed at providing permanent irrigation facilities to farmers.

Dr. Beldale emphasized that access to continuous irrigation is crucial for rural development and the economic stability of farmers. "This scheme offers a long-term solution for those struggling with water shortages, helping farmers carry out agricultural activities throughout the year," he said. He added that proper use of the irrigation systems would increase crop production and significantly improve farmers' income.

The MLA also urged the government to increase the Ganga Kalyan target to further strengthen the economic independence and social upliftment of Scheduled Tribe farmers. "Central and State Governments are committed to empowering farmers and supporting rural development," he noted.

Taluk Development Officer Somashekar, Mukhandas Suresh Mashetti, Shanmukappa Karakampalli, Ashoka Reddy, Nagashetty Chatanalli, Kashinath Aldi, Subhash Metage, Udaya Maharaj, Pundalik Tubaka, Janardhana Reddy, Paramesh Patil, Shailesh, Siddharudha Bhalke, and Suryakanta Gunnalli attended the program.

Dr. Beldale highlighted the government's focus on ensuring that irrigation facilities are available year-round, enabling farmers to boost crop output and income. "We are fully committed to the economic well-being of our farmers and rural development," he said.

The Ganga Kalyan Scheme continues to be a vital step in improving agricultural productivity and supporting the livelihoods of Scheduled Tribe communities across Bidar South.

MP Sudhakar Announces Massive Ten Lane Highway Upgrade

CHIKKABALLAPUR

In a major boost to regional infrastructure, Chikkaballapur MP Dr. K. Sudhakar announced on Thursday that National Highway 44, stretching from Devanahalli to the Andhra Pradesh border, will be transformed into a 10-lane expressway. The ambitious project, estimated at ₹2,500 crore, is set to commence within three months following the successful completion of land acquisition.

Presiding over the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting, Dr. Sudhakar reviewed various central schemes. Beyond infrastructure, he emphasized agricultural welfare, noting that the Centre has set a high MSP of ₹4,886 per quintal for Ragi, urging local farmers to utilize government procurement centers.

Energy self-reliance was another focal point. Under the KUSUM-C scheme, the district aims to generate 300 MW of solar power, ensuring farmers receive free electricity during daylight hours. "Such initiatives are milestones toward making India a developed nation by 2047," the MP stated.

Addressing public health and rural development, the MP confirmed that the District AYUSH Hospital will be inaugurated within two months. Furthermore, 30 villages have been selected under the Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana for comprehensive upgrades based on local demands.

With summer approaching, Dr. Sudhakar directed officials to prevent water scarcity. While the Jal Jeevan Mission has seen progress in over 800 villages, he warned contractors against delays. He also advocated for third-stage water treatment for the HN and KC Valley projects to ensure safety for agricultural use, citing scientific concerns over secondary-treated water.

Karwar Transport Overhaul: New Buses And Infrastructure Upgrades

KARWAR

In a move to bolster regional connectivity, Satish K. Sail has instructed the North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) to sync bus schedules with local demand. Speaking at the Taluk Panchayat KDP meeting on Thursday, Sail expressed dissatisfaction over the cancellation of previous multi-axle services to Bengaluru, emphasizing that student exams and senior citizen needs must dictate transport priorities.

Transportation officials revealed a significant fiscal recovery, noting that the Shakti scheme—providing free travel for women—helped the local division swing from a ₹36 crore loss to a ₹13 crore profit. Infrastructure is also scaling up, with a ₹6 crore bus depot currently under construction.

To further ease long-distance travel, two new 'Pallakki' buses are scheduled to begin the Karwar-Bengaluru route within three days.

Road safety emerged as a critical concern. Sail directed the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to install streetlights from Majali to Bhatkal and construct underpasses at high-accident zones like Aversa Kyathayani Temple and Hiregutti. To prevent nighttime accidents, local panchayats will now display notices requiring livestock owners to stall cattle after 5:00 PM.

The meeting also touched upon urban safety, with Sail ordering HESCOM to replace aging electrical wires and instructing police to set up checkpoints to stop 50-ton overloaded vehicles from damaging roads. Finally, health officials were told to install digital scrolling boards at multi-specialty hospitals to provide real-time updates on doctor availability and diagnostic machinery status.

Youth Parliament Echoes Basavanna's Vision At University

TUMKUR

The spirit of democratic debate took center stage at Tumkur University on Thursday as students gathered for the Viksit Bharat District Level Youth Parliament 2026. Organized by the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the event aimed to instill constitutional values in the next generation of leaders.

Addressing a packed Sir M. Visvesvaraya Auditorium, keynote speaker and former MLA Shri Y.S.V. Datta urged students to look toward historical milestones to safeguard the future. Drawing a parallel between modern governance and the 12th-century Anubhava Mantapa, Datta described Basavanna's assembly as the world's first true parliament, where logic and equality reigned supreme.

"Democracy thrives on institutional strength, not individual worship," Datta remarked, warning the youth against the dangers of personality cults. He reflected on the lessons learned during the Emergency period, reminding the audience that a vigilant youth is the greatest defense against the erosion of democratic rights. He encouraged participants to engage in constructive dissent and evidence-based debate.

The program, coordinated by Dr. Nagabhushana Bagganadu, featured mock parliamentary sessions where students debated national policies, mimicking the procedures of the Lok Sabha. The university's NSS unit highlighted that such platforms are essential to transforming India into a developed nation (Viksit Bharat) by 2047. The event concluded with a call for students to remain politically informed and ethically grounded in their civic duties.

Mandya hosts seminar on SC-ST rights

MANDYA

A seminar and workshop on the prevention of atrocities against Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities and the eradication of untouchability will be held on March 7 at 10 am at the District Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan. The program is jointly organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat Social Welfare Department, and District Legal Services Authority, Mandya.

The event will see the presence of spiritual leaders, including Sri Sri Nirmalanandanath Mahaswamiji of Sri Adichunchanagiri Maha Sansthan Math, Sri Basavamurthy Madar Chennaiyya Swamiji of Shivsharan Madar Chennaiyya Gurupeeth, Chitradurga, and Sri Gyanprakash Swamiji of Urilingapeddishwara Maha Sansthan Math, Kalaburgi.

Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H.D. Kumaraswamy will be the chief guest, while Agriculture and District In-charge Minister N. Chaluvarayaswamy will inaugurate the program. Mandya MLA P. Ravi Kumar will preside over the event.

Other prominent invitees include Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Chairman and Srirangapatna MLA A.B. Ramesh Bandisidde Gowda, State Pollution Control Board Chairman and Malavalli MLA P.M. Narendraswamy, and State SC and ST Commission Chairman Dr. Murthy.

Legislative Council and Assembly members such as Dinesh Gooli Gowda, Madhu G. Made Gowda, K. Vivekananda, Darshan Puttannaiah, H.T. Manju, and K.M. Udaya will participate. Heads of key organizations, including the State Vokkaliga Community Development Corporation, Karnataka State Food Commission, Mandya Urban Development Authority, Mysore Sugar Company, and Handloom Development Corporation, are also expected to attend.

District-level officials, including District In-charge Secretaries, Zilla Panchayat Administrative Officer Manoj Kumar Meena, and District Legal Services Authority Member Secretary and Senior Civil Judge Anand M, will be special invitees.

The program aims to raise awareness, strengthen legal protections, and promote social equality for SC and ST communities across Mandya district.

Mini Job fair scheduled in Haveri

HAVERI

The Haveri District Employment Exchange Office will host a Mini Job Fair on March 9 at 10 am to fill vacancies in private companies through direct interviews. Both male and female candidates with qualifications ranging from SSLC, PUC, ITI, Diploma to any degree are eligible to participate. Job seekers must register in advance and bring their biodata and a copy of Aadhaar card. For more details, applicants can contact the District Employment Exchange Office at 08375-249291 or mobile numbers 8748981288, 8970827180, 9019317247.

Mandya plans major switch to LED streetlights

MANDYA

The Mandya district administration has announced a major plan to replace all traditional street lights in the district's eight urban local bodies with energy-efficient LED lights. District Collector Dr. Kumar said the move would save electricity, reduce maintenance costs, and provide a longer service life for public lighting.

Presiding over a district-level meeting on the Centralized Commissioning and Maintenance (CCMS) Scheme, Dr. Kumar explained that a total of 15,593 traditional street lights would be replaced.

In addition, 5,000 new LED lights would be installed across the urban areas. The maintenance of the street lights will be ensured for seven years to guarantee consistent performance.

Dr. Kumar emphasized the importance of installing smart meters within the project areas and implementing the CCMS system to monitor real-time maintenance data. "With this system, we can track performance efficiently and respond quickly to any issues," he said.

Currently, the urban local bodies spend around Rs. 15 crores annually on electricity for street lights. After implementing the LED project, this consumption is expected to reduce by nearly 58%, saving approximately Rs. 7 to 8 crores each year. He instructed officials to coordinate with project consultants, CHESCO, and local authorities to ensure smooth implementation of the project.

The District Urban Development Fund Project Officer T. N. Narasimhamurthy and Executive Engineer Pratap attended the meeting along with urban local body officials.

Dr. Kumar concluded that the LED streetlight project is a step toward energy efficiency, cost savings, and modernization of public infrastructure in Mandya, reflecting the district's commitment to sustainable development.

LOSS DOCUMENT

I, Sri Venkataramana V.N., S/o Late Narayanappa, residing at Railway Station Road, Nekkundi Ward, Chintamani (Aadhaar No. 802587224522), presently living in Kanampalli Village, hereby state that about 7 years ago I purchased Site No. 1, measuring 1545 square feet, in Survey No. 27/1, Municipal Khata No. 7687/6230/1, 698/1. The registered Sale Deed and Partition Deed of the said property, which were registered in the Sub-Registrar Office, Book No. 1 Page no CMN-1 00134-2004-05, CMN-1-01177-2014-15 C.D. No. CMND152 12.06.2014th Dated have been lost. In this regard, I have lodged a complaint at the Chintamani Rural Police Station on 05-03-2026. The Lost Document Report Number is 2094298/2026. If anyone finds the above-mentioned documents, they are requested to kindly inform at the above address or contact Mobile No.: 9591720529.
K.N. Prasannakumar, Advocate, Doddaballapura

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PARVATHAMMA B R W/o B K RANGANATHA SASTRY, R/o No 118, 6th Cross, Singapura Main Road, Maruthi Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560097, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PARVATHI.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VARALAXMI N SHETTAR W/o NANDISH SHETTAR, R/o 1465/34/A2, Kagadagar Oni, Gadag, Karnataka-582101, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SUJATA SHETTAR.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MADHU M R S/o RANGAPPA S R/o No 1331, Old CI Office Road, Near Panduranga Swamy Temple, Madhava Nagara, Gauribidanur, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka-561208, have changed the name of my minor daughter SHAANVI SHREE M.M aged 9 years and she shall hereafter be known as VINSHIKA SAANVI M.M.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MADHU M R S/o RANGAPPA S R/o No 1331, Old CI Office Road, Near Panduranga Swamy Temple, Madhava Nagara, Gauribidanur, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka-561208, have changed the name of my minor son SAI SAMARTH M.M aged 6 years and he shall hereafter be known as NIMISH ARYA M.M.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RUKMINI S SHETTY W/o K SEETHARAMA SHETTY, R/o 223-A 1/5, Main Road, Behind Gokul Hotel, Kundapura, Udupi, Karnataka-576201, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JYOTHI S SHETTY.

IN THE COURT OF THE CHIEF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE OF ERODE
MCOP No. 49/2025
MURUGESAN ... PETITIONER -V/s- RAJASEKAR (31), S/o. Ramu, 208, Gowdanpalaya, Badamanavarthe Kaval, Subramanyapura, Bangalore South, Bangalore. Karnataka State-560061 ... **RESPONDENT No. 1**
NOTICE TO 1ST RESPONDENT
The Petitioner Murugesan, S/o. Palanisamy Gounder have filed MCOP.NO.49/2025 against you for compensation for the injuries sustained by him in Road Traffic Accident that took place on 01.11.2023.
The above case is posted for your (1st respondent) appearance on **27.03.2026** at **10.30 A.M** before the Hon'ble Chief Judicial Magistrate Erode. If you do not appear on **27.03.2026** at **10:30 A.M.** the case will be proceeded in your absence, and an exparte order will be passed against you.
C.T. PRAVIN, Advocate
M.S. No. 3223/2017, ERODE
Cell No:80723 31281. Date: 04.03.2026

Document Lost

This is to inform to General public that my client Sri.K Harinatha S/o K Narayanappa,Residing at Dhobipalya,Mulabagilu Town Taluk and Kolar District, I am the Owner of the Below said Property,while Sale Deed for taken Digital copy ,have lost following Documents of property pertating to below Mentioned property Situated at Dhobipalya,Mulabagilu Town Taluk and Kolar District, had published the factum of lost of her Original Regd Sale Deed,Dated;-12-06-2008, Regd Sale Deed Executed by Sri, B.R.Krishnaiah setty s/o Late, B.K.Ramayyashetty, in Favour of Sri.Venkatachalapathi in favour of C A S/o Late, C V Anjaneyappa, In regd as Book No.1,Volume No.MBL-1-00527/2008-09, in CDNO.MBLD 21,In regd before of the SRO Mulabagilu,police complaint have been filed with regards to loss of the above said Document vide complaint in NCR NO. Lost Report no.2089384/2026, DATED;-02-03-2026, and complaint dated;-02-03-2026, by respective person,if anybody finds these Document please inform within 7 Days in Below mentioned Address.
Place;-Chinthamani,
Date;-02-03-2026 K.S.HARISH KUMAR
ADVOCATE
Office: NEAR KISHORE SCHOOL, ABOVE APPOLO PHARMACY, BESIDE SANTHOSHI MATHA TEMPLE, BANGALORE MAIN ROAD CHINTHAMANI.M;-9980110692

QUICK READ

Naxalite with Rs 5 lakh bounty killed

DANTEWADA

A Naxalite with a Rs 5 lakh reward on his head was killed in Dantewada after a fierce gunfight with security forces. The clash happened Wednesday night in the forested hills of the Geedam area. A joint team of the District Reserve Guard and Bastar Fighters was conducting an anti-Naxal operation after receiving intelligence about hidden weapons. Around 8-10 Naxalites fired at the team, resulting in the deadly encounter, police said.

Court denies namaz space near Mumbai airport

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday refused relief to taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers who sought permission to offer namaz near Mumbai airport during Ramzan. The court said security concerns are more important than religious requests in sensitive areas like airports. A bench of Justices B P Colabawalla and Firdosh Pooniwalla said prayers cannot be claimed as a right at any place. Authorities told the court that seven other locations were checked, but none were suitable due to congestion, security issues, and airport development plans. The petition was filed by the Taxi-Rickshaw Ola-Uber Men's Union.

BJP MLC duped in digital arrest scam

SULTANPUR

A case has been registered after BJP MLC Shailendra Singh was allegedly kept under "digital arrest" for about 90 minutes by a fraud caller. Police said Singh received a call on March 2 from a person claiming to be an officer of the Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad. The caller accused him of money laundering and said a bank account in Canara Bank was linked to his name. Singh told them he had no account outside Lucknow and Sultanpur. The caller kept him on a video call and asked him to stay alone in a locked room.

Jaishankar dials Iran min amid West Asia tensions

India expressed concern over Iran conflict, urging restraint, civilian safety, protection of Indians, and stability in vital trade and energy routes

NEW DELHI

India expressed serious concern over rising tensions in West Asia as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke with Iran's Foreign Minister.

External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Thursday held a telephonic conversation with Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi amid the worsening conflict in West Asia. The discussion took place as violence in the region continues to rise, raising concerns about security, trade and the safety of Indian citizens living there.

In a post on X, Jaishankar confirmed that he had spoken with Araghchi during the afternoon. However, the minister did not reveal specific details about what was discussed during the conversation. The call comes at a time when tensions in the region have increased, especially after recent military developments involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

Earlier this week, the Ministry of External Affairs said India was deeply worried about the growing conflict in Iran and the wider Gulf region. The government urged all parties involved to exercise restraint and give priority to the safety of civilians.

India has strong concerns because nearly one crore Indians live and work across the Gulf countries. Their safety and well-being remain a top priority for the government.

Officials also pointed out that the conflict could affect important trade routes and energy supplies that pass through the region.

The ministry warned that any disruption in these routes could seriously impact the Indian economy. It also expressed concern about attacks on merchant ships in nearby waters. In recent days, some Indian nationals have reportedly died or gone missing due to such incidents.

India once again called for dialogue and diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and bring peace to the region. The government stressed that stability in West Asia is essential because of its importance to global energy markets and the large Indian community living there.

Finnish Prez pays tribute to Gandhi at Rajghat

Stubb also held meetings with Indian leaders to strengthen bilateral ties between India and Finland.

NEW DELHI

Alexander Stubb, President of Finland, paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat on Thursday during his State visit to India.

The Finnish leader laid a wreath at the memorial of the Father of the Nation, a traditional gesture made by visiting heads of state to honour Gandhi's message of peace and non-violence.

The visit to Rajghat took place shortly after a meeting between Stubb and India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in New Delhi. During the interaction, the two leaders discussed ways to strengthen cooperation and further deepen relations between the two countries.

Sharing details of the meeting on social media platform X, Jaishankar said he was pleased to meet President Stubb and expressed confidence that the Finnish leader's discussions with Narendra Modi would help strengthen India-Finland relations. He also said he looked forward to Stubb's address at the Raisina Dialogue later in the evening.

President Stubb arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday and was welcomed with a ceremonial reception. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the Finnish President received a Guard of Honour and was welcomed at the airport by Minister of State for External Affairs V. K. Singh.

The Finnish leader will serve as the Chief Guest and keynote speaker at the 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue, India's major conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.

During his visit, Stubb is also scheduled to meet Droupadi Murmu and C. P. Radhakrishnan. Later, he will travel to Mumbai to meet Devendra Fadnavis and other leaders, interact with business representatives, and address students at the University of Mumbai.

India and Finland share warm ties based on democratic values, and the visit aims to expand cooperation in trade, technology and global partnerships.

Guj expands free essential medicines list for patients

GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat government has expanded its Essential Drug List for 2025–26 by adding 150 new medicines to improve free treatment in public hospitals. After the revision, the total number of medicines and medical supplies available in government facilities has increased to 1,479.

State Health Minister Praful Pansheriya announced that the updated list will help ensure better access to medicines for patients across the state. These medicines, along with surgical items and diagnostic supplies, will be provided free of cost through the public healthcare system.

The review of the list was carried out by Gujarat Medical Services Corporation Limited after examining medicines currently used in government hospitals. As part of the process, 150 new medicines were added to the list while 57 medicines that were no longer required were removed.

According to the minister, medicines included in the Essential Drug List are supplied to healthcare centres at every level. This includes primary health centres in rural and urban areas, district hospitals and medical college hospitals.

Pansheriya said providing quality treatment and medicines to every patient is the state government's priority. He added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, the government is committed to ensuring healthcare services reach people in every part of the state. The updated list includes 378 medicines for primary healthcare services and 628 medicines for secondary-level treatment.

The tertiary-level list contains 1,475 medicines used in specialised treatment at major hospitals. The review has also increased medicines available for several disease categories.

Agencies warn of AI propaganda targeting Indian youth

NEW DELHI

Indian intelligence agencies have warned about an online propaganda campaign using artificial intelligence to radicalise youth during the ongoing Iran conflict.

Security agencies in India have raised concerns over a possible radicalisation campaign linked to the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel and the United States. Officials say extremist groups are using artificial intelligence to create propaganda videos aimed at influencing young people in different parts of the country. According to intelligence inputs, the campaign started after the reported killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, which triggered retaliatory attacks across parts of West Asia. Since then, agencies have noticed online discussions and messaging that appear to encourage radical thinking among youth. An officer from the Intelligence Bureau said that AI-generated videos are being circulated in several Indian languages. These videos are designed to target specific regions. For example, videos meant for Kerala are made in Malayalam, while content targeting Uttar Pradesh is created in Hindi. For audiences in Jammu and Kashmir, videos are prepared in Kashmiri or Koshur.

Officials say that the propaganda is not aimed at any single community but is targeting both Shia and Sunni Muslims. The goal is believed to be encouraging youth to adopt extremist views and possibly carry out attacks in India.

Authorities are also closely monitoring social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram and X, where such messages are being shared. Investigators say influencers running religious or cultural channels may also be used to subtly spread radical messages.

Red Sea crisis hits Coimbatore textile, grinder exports

CHENNAI

Exports from Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu are facing delays as the conflict in West Asia disrupts major sea routes used for global trade. Officials said textile, garment and wet grinder shipments are affected due to problems in shipping through the Red Sea region.

Exporters say the situation worsened after the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, an important shipping route for international cargo movement. Ships that usually travel through the Red Sea and Gulf region are now taking a longer route around the African continent via the Cape of Good Hope.

Industry body Southern India Mills' Association said the change in route has increased shipping time by about 20 to 25 days. This delay is affecting exporters who must meet strict delivery deadlines set by international buyers.

Manufacturers fear that delayed shipments could lead to cancelled orders or requests for heavy discounts from overseas clients. Exporters also expect logistics costs to increase as shipping companies raise freight charges due to longer travel distances and higher fuel usage.

Coimbatore is one of India's major textile hubs. Manufacturers in the region export garments worth nearly $2 billion every year to the United Arab Emirates and about $1 billion to other Gulf countries.

Raisina Meet focuses on strategic autonomy, disruptive tech

NEW DELHI

The first Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative meeting was held in New Delhi on Thursday, bringing together global experts, policymakers and scholars to discuss the growing importance of science diplomacy.

The discussions focused on strategic autonomy and the governance of new disruptive technologies.

The initiative was jointly organised by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India and the Observer Research Foundation as part of the Raisina Dialogue.

Around 80 participants, including scientists, innovators, diplomats and researchers from across the world, attended the closed-door meeting.

The event was chaired by Principal Scientific Adviser Ajay Kumar Sood. It was co-chaired by Peter Gluckman, President of the International Science Council, Marilyne Andersen, Director General of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator, and Vijay Chauthaiwale of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Speakers highlighted that science and technology now play a major role in national development, economic growth and global security.

They said science diplomacy must adapt to new technological changes and changing global political situations.

The first roundtable discussed science diplomacy in the era of strategic autonomy. Participants stressed the need to balance national interests with international scientific cooperation.

They also highlighted the importance of building trust in research networks and strengthening global partnerships.

The second roundtable focused on governance of disruptive technologies. Experts discussed ways to develop fair and effective global rules for emerging technologies.

Office of the Executive Engineer Public Works Department (PWD), Chikkamagaluru Division, Chikkamagaluru

Short-Term Tender Notice No.: 36/2025-26 Date: 03.03.2026

In the Tender Notice seen above Tender is invited from eligible contractors for total 05 works through KPP Portal under Head of Account: 5054-80-190-0-01-132 Karnataka State Road Development Corporation Limited – Capital Expenditure (District Main Road Bridges), 3054-03-102-0-01-200 Maintenance of State Highway Bridges, 4059-80-051-0-32-386 Judicial Buildings related to Sub divisions of Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru District. Details of capabilities to undertaking or having implemented the works (as per Standard Tender Document KW-1 & 3) should be attached. Contractors can be awarded the contract only if they have the minimum eligibilities as mentioned in Act 3. Minimum Approx. Amount Rs. 6.00 lakhs and Maximum Approx. Amount Rs. 63.00 lakhs. For Tender to be submitted through KPP Portal for 05 works (Indent No. 34007 on 10.03.2026, Indent No. 34166, 29245 (6th Call), 34087 on 11.03.2026, Indent No. 33847 on 13.03.2026) tender should be submitted within 4.30 PM. For further details the case worker can be contacted during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Chikkamagaluru Division, Chikkamagalur.

DIPR/smg/ksmca/25-26/181/1949

Zilla Panchayath, Tumkur

Office of The Executive Engineer,

Rural Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, Tumkur

NO.23/EE/RDWS&SD/TMK/JJM/AE-1&2&3/3780/25-26

Date: 03.03.2026

Short Term Tender Notification

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation Division Tumkur has Invites request for proposal tenders from the eligible bidders for the One Cover and Two Cover work detailed in the table below. Tender procedure as per rule 28 of the KTPP act shall be followed. The tenders are Required to submit through Karnataka Public Procurement mode through portal. (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/) from Class-IV & above PWD Registered Contractors who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following JJM Works of C N HAlli, Gubbi, Kunigal Koratagere, Madhugiri, Sira, Tumkur, Tiptur and Turuvekere Taluk of Tumkur Dist. As per the schedule given below. (Minimum Tender Amount Rs.13.43 Lakhs EMD Amount Rs.33,580/- and Maximum Tender Amount Rs.94.17Lakhs EMD Amount Rs.1,88,340/-)

Particulars & Details: 1. Last date of submit bids on Karnataka Public Procurement portal **16-03-2026** Upto 5.00 PM. 2. Pre Bid Meeting Date: **11-13-2026** at 11.00 AM Venue, Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking water & Sanitation Division Tumkur. 3. Technical Opening of Bids: **17-03-2026** at 5.30 PM onwards. 4. Financial Opening of Bids **18-03-2026** at 5.30 PM onwards.

For further particulars/details may avail from the office of the undersigned during office hours on all working days and may visit the website (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/)

Sd/-(Sri K M Kumaraswamy)
Executve Engineer,
RDW&S, Division, Tumkur.

DIPR/TUM/477/KSMCA/2025-26

FULL SIX-STANZA ROW

Calcutta HC questions PIL over 'Vande Mataram' protocol

KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday questioned the admissibility of a public interest litigation challenging the Centre's guidelines on the official protocol for performing the national song Vande Mataram.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Partha Sarathi Sen asked the petitioner to submit logical evidence to justify why the court should hear the PIL. The bench said the petitioner must establish proper grounds before the case can proceed further.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General Ashoke Chakraborty raised objections about the maintainability of the PIL. He argued that the petition appeared to be filed for personal interest rather than public interest. Chakraborty also said matters connected to the country's sovereignty and national security, especially those involving the national song, should be handled with caution. He added that if the petitioner fails to prove the basis of the PIL, the court should consider imposing a penalty.

Responding to this, the petitioner's counsel Bikas Ranjan Bhattacharya, a senior advocate and Rajya Sabha member from the Communist Party of India (Marxist), explained the purpose of the petition. He said the challenge was against the Union government's directive issued on January 20 to chief secretaries of all states. The order suggested that the full version of Vande Mataram, consisting of six stanzas and lasting about three minutes and ten seconds, should be performed at major state events.

Bhattacharya argued that historically only two stanzas were accepted as the national song after suggestions by Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore to maintain communal harmony.

The court directed the petitioner to provide supporting historical evidence. The next hearing has been scheduled for March 23.

QUICK READ

Holi clash UP's Barabanki leaves 11 injured

LUCKNOW

At least 11 people were hurt after a Holi colour fight turned violent in Tikaria village of UP's Barabanki district, police said. The clash began Wednesday afternoon when two groups argued over playing with colours. The argument quickly turned physical, with both sides using sticks, batons, and rods for about 10 minutes. Locals tried to calm the situation before police arrived. Eight from one group and three from the other were injured and taken for medical care.

Mizoram drug bust: 7 traffickers arrested

AIZAWL

Authorities in Mizoram seized drugs worth nearly Rs 36 crore and arrested seven people near the India–Myanmar border. The Narcotics Control Bureau, with the state excise and intelligence teams, carried out three raids, recovering over 36 kg of methamphetamine tablets and 905 grams of heroin. In Champhai district, police intercepted another consignment valued at Rs 4.88 crore, arresting three more, including Myanmar nationals. Officials said the crackdown followed routine surveillance near key border areas.

India denies US using ports against Iran

NEW DELHI

India has dismissed claims that the United States is using its ports to strike Iran, calling them "fake and false." The statement followed an interview where former US Army Colonel Douglas Macgregor alleged US forces were relying on Indian ports due to destroyed bases elsewhere. The Press Information Bureau (PIB) quickly refuted the claim, clarifying that US naval operations are not using Indian ports. Officials emphasized that the allegation has no basis and is completely untrue.

Stubb exalts India, Modi lauds his 'ironman' spirit

'With an energetic leader like you, we will also achieve a new triathlon of innovation, digital, and sustainability between India and Finland'

NEW DELHI

Visiting Finnish President Alexander Stubb on Thursday praised India's economic growth, democratic values, and strategic importance to Europe.

"We should all become a little bit more Indian," he said during a joint press briefing with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House.

Stubb highlighted India's pragmatic foreign policy, strategic autonomy, and support for multilateral cooperation as examples the world could learn from. He called India's economic progress an "economic miracle" and admired its fast growth.

PM Modi, in turn, lauded Stubb's personal achievements, particularly his participation in Ironman Triathlons, calling it an inspiration. "With an energetic leader like you, we will also achieve a new triathlon of innovation, digital, and sustainability between India and Finland," Modi said. An Ironman consists of a 3.86 km swim, 180.2 km cycling, and a 42.2 km marathon run, all in one day, making it one of the toughest endurance races globally.

Stubb also noted the shared democratic values between India and Finland, describing India as one of the world's largest and most influential democracies. Recalling his previous visit in 2013, he said India's transformation over the last decade was remarkable. Stubb shared his cultural experience, enjoying the Holi festival during his arrival, despite some playful colour splashes.

Prime Minister Modi welcomed Stubb warmly, calling him a distinguished global leader, intellectual, and chief guest at the Raisina Dialogue. He described Stubb as an experienced and dynamic personality whose visit strengthens India-Finland relations and fosters global cooperation, innovation, and sustainable development.

US seeks Iran stability, offers energy cooperation

NEW DELHI

US Deputy Secretary Christopher Landau calls for a stable Middle East, warns against Iran nuclear threats, and offers India energy support amid ongoing regional tensions.

At the Raisina Dialogue, US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau outlined Washington's goals regarding Iran, stressing the importance of ending the region's threat to global security.

He said the United States did not initially seek military engagement but was forced to act after diplomatic efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program failed.

"The end game is a Middle East that is not a threat to other parts of the world," he said, describing decades of Tehran's hostility toward the US.

Landau warned that an Iran with nuclear weapons could destabilize the world.

He emphasized that Washington's approach included patient diplomacy, setting clear red lines on nuclear development, which Tehran ultimately ignored.

He added that much regional instability could be traced to Iran's leadership and highlighted the need for an international effort to support change while respecting the will of the Iranian people.

Focusing on India, Landau encouraged New Delhi to explore alternative energy sources, proposing the United States as a reliable partner. "We are an energy-rich country, and we want to cooperate with you," he said, assuring India that Washington would address both short-term and long-term energy needs during the ongoing regional conflict.

He stressed that collaboration between the US, India, and other partners could help stabilize the Middle East and secure global energy supplies while fostering a new normal in the region.

Landau concluded that a cooperative approach could ensure regional stability, safeguard energy interests, and prevent Iran from using nuclear capabilities to threaten the world.

They attacked despite entering negotiations: Iran envoy

NEW DELHI

Iranian Ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali, said on Thursday that Tehran had entered negotiations with the United States despite doubts about American intentions, but was attacked before the agreed timeline. He emphasized that Iran continues to follow the principles of the late Ayatollah Khameni, who guided the country to stand on the "right side of history."

Fathali accused Israel of destabilizing West Asia, alleging that the "Zionist regime" aimed to destroy infrastructure and property across the region. He clarified that Iran does not attack neighboring countries and maintains good relations with them, but warned that US bases in the region could be targeted if necessary. "They know very well where Iran is located. But unfortunately, the Zionist regime wants to disturb and destroy all the region," he said. The envoy highlighted that Iran had successfully shot down three US F-15 fighter jets during the conflict. He stressed that these actions are limited to foreign military bases and not directed at neighboring nations.

Regarding India, Fathali said that Iran is currently not in contact with the Indian government about the ongoing tensions. "No, we have no negotiation. We have no messages… You can ask from the Indian side," he added. He also mourned the loss of Ayatollah Khameni, describing him as a guiding figure whose advice shaped Iran's foreign policy approach. Fathali said the country remains committed to defending its principles and responding appropriately to any attacks while pursuing its strategic objectives in the region.

Russian Ambassador to India pitches for faster resolution

NEW DELHI

Amid the escalating West Asia conflict, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov on Thursday emphasized that the situation can only be resolved through negotiations. "Resolution is always through negotiations. This conflict should be resolved as soon as possible," he said while speaking to the media.

Alipov reiterated Russia's condemnation of the US-Israel strikes, which Moscow described as a "premeditated and unprovoked act of aggression" targeting a government that resisted foreign pressure. He added that it is India's choice where to source its oil supplies, affirming Russia's willingness to continue supplying oil to India.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi warned that the United States will regret sinking the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena in international waters. The vessel, carrying nearly 130 sailors, was attacked by a US submarine in the Indian Ocean. Araghchi called the act an "atrocity at sea" and criticized the precedent it sets.The attack was confirmed by US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who described the sinking as the first torpedo strike on an enemy ship since World War II. US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Dan Caine, called it a demonstration of America's global military reach. The conflict has further escalated tensions, with Iran threatening to target Israel's Dimona nuclear site if the US or Israel attempts to overthrow the Islamic Republic. Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz has stated that any new Iranian leadership installed externally would be a legitimate target.

REAFFIRMS OIL SUPPLY TO INDIA

Alipov called for a negotiated resolution to the ongoing conflict. "The resolution is always through negotiations. The conflict should stop as soon as possible," he told reporters in New Delhi. Alipov stressed that it is India's choice to decide on oil suppliers, even as global fuel prices rise due to threats to the Strait of Hormuz. "It's up to India to decide on supplies and supply sources. We have always been open towards supplying oil to India," he said. When asked about the war's duration, he said, "I have no idea. This is a question to the US." On February 28, Russia condemned the joint US-Israel strikes on Iran as "unprovoked," urging a return to political and diplomatic solutions. The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed a phone conversation between Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Iran's Seyed Abbas Araghchi, in which Iran detailed steps to repel the attacks and called for an urgent UN Security Council meeting. Lavrov condemned the strikes as violations of international law, highlighting risks to regional and global stability. He affirmed Russia's readiness, including within the UN, to facilitate peaceful solutions based on international law, mutual respect, and balanced interests.

Nitish Kumar files RS nomination amid tensions in Bihar

Continued from page 1

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday filed his nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha elections, sparking political debates across the state.

Along with him, four other candidates from the ruling alliance — Nitin Nabin, Shivesh Kumar Ram, and Upendra Kushwaha — submitted their nominations the same day.

The event was attended by senior National Democratic Alliance leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who traveled from New Delhi to Patna. However, the move triggered unrest among some Janata Dal (United) workers. Supporters gathered outside Nitish Kumar's residence, raising slogans against the BJP and alleging a plan to push him out of active state politics. Some shouted "Down with Amit Shah," accusing the BJP of weakening JD(U) through "Operation Lotus."

Earlier, a Bihar BJP minister faced protests and had to leave the area due to the commotion. JD(U) workers claimed pressure was being applied to move Nitish Kumar to national politics, suggesting the BJP wants direct control over state leadership ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections.

Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav criticized the nomination, saying public sentiment opposes leadership change. He alleged that the BJP aims to sideline Nitish Kumar, citing similar strategies against allies in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab. Tejashwi questioned the decision to send Nitish to the Rajya Sabha without wider public consultation.

The nomination marks a major shift in Bihar's political scene. While NDA leaders projected unity at the event, protests from JD(U) workers and reactions from the opposition indicate rising tensions. Analysts suggest that the state may see increased political activity in the coming weeks as parties prepare for the next elections, with Nitish Kumar's Rajya Sabha entry playing a central role in shaping alliances and strategies.

Seychelles foreign min arrives for 'Raisina Dialogue'

NEW DELHI

Seychelles Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Minister Barry Faure reached New Delhi on Thursday to attend the 11th Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship geopolitical conference. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) described the visit as a step to further strengthen India-Seychelles bilateral relations. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal extended a warm welcome and noted that the countries share a robust and multifaceted partnership. Other foreign dignitaries have also arrived for the dialogue. Mauritius Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful, Malta's Deputy Prime Minister Ian Borg, and Bhutan's Foreign Minister DN Dhungyel joined the event. The MEA highlighted enduring partnerships with Mauritius, Malta, and Bhutan, rooted in shared culture, heritage, and strong people-to-people ties. Their visits are expected to enhance diplomatic relations and cooperation across multiple sectors.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Raisina Dialogue 2026 in New Delhi, marking the start of the three-day event running from March 5 to 7. Finland President Alexander Stubb attended the inaugural session as Chief Guest and delivered the keynote address.

The dialogue brings together global leaders, policymakers, and experts from 110 countries to discuss key international challenges. Participants include ministers, former heads of state, members of parliament, military commanders, business leaders, technology experts, academics, and journalists. This year's theme, "Samskara — Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement," focuses on fostering dialogue to address pressing global geopolitical and geo-economic issues.

The event provides a platform for exchanging ideas, strengthening multilateral ties, and building collaborative solutions.

SACRED RITUAL

ELABORATE ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE FOR MAHA KUMBHABHISHEKAM

VIJAYAWADA

The district administration has put in place elaborate preparations for the Maha Kumbhabhishekam of Sri Durga Malleswara Swamivarla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri, scheduled from March 6 to 8.

The sacred ritual, held once every 12 years, is expected to draw lakhs of devotees from Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states. A team of officials, including District Collector G Lakshmisha, Temple Chairman Borra Radhakrishna, NTR District Police Commissioner S V Rajashekhar Babu, Municipal Commissioner Dhyanachandra H M, and Temple Executive Officer V K Seena Nayak, conducted a thorough inspection of facilities. They reviewed works at Vimana Gopuram, yagashala, prasadam counters, and ghat road amenities, directing engineering teams to complete final touches on time.

Collector Lakshmisha assured that adequate arrangements for prasadam distribution, parking, and luggage counters have been made, with priority for common devotees. "Drones and AI-based monitoring systems will help manage the crowds effectively," he said.

Police Commissioner Rajashekhar Babu stated that 1,500 police personnel will be deployed to ensure security, with daily footfall expected between one lakh and 1.5 lakh devotees. An Integrated Command Control Centre will operate from March 5 to coordinate all departments.

Temple Chairman Radhakrishna said rituals will be conducted under the guidance of Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. He added that drinking water, milk, buttermilk, and biscuits will be provided for devotees. Executive Officer Seena Nayak noted that arjitha sevas have been cancelled, and Antaralayam darshan will be suspended on the third day to facilitate the smooth conduct of rituals.

With these meticulous arrangements, authorities aim to ensure a safe and orderly Maha Kumbhabhishekam experience for all devotees.

Middle powers form new tech alliances

Australia, Canada, and India are forming a strategic technology partnership to strengthen innovation and cooperation globally

Continued from page 1

In response to growing global tensions, middle powers are seeking new ways to navigate an increasingly fragmented world.

An issue brief by the Institute for Security & Development Policy highlights the Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation (ACITI) Partnership as a key example.

The partnership focuses on emerging and critical technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, and clean energy systems.

By combining their resources, these countries aim to create resilient supply chains and reduce reliance on dominant global powers. India's digital economy and tech workforce, Canada's research ecosystem, and Australia's expertise in critical minerals complement each other. Analysts describe this collaboration as a "tech triangle" capable of influencing technology governance and standards in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

The brief explains that the global system is shifting from gradual transition to sharp ruptures, with economic interdependence increasingly used as a strategic tool rather than a stabilizing force. Middle powers are choosing cooperative frameworks over protectionism to maintain strategic autonomy while boosting economic resilience.

Experts note that the partnership's success depends on strong political commitment, policy coordination, and sustained investment in research and development. If effectively implemented, this tech triangle could serve as a model for other middle-power alliances adapting to the changing geopolitical landscape.

The initiative reflects broader efforts to diversify global technology networks amid US-China rivalry and rising protectionism. By working together, Australia, Canada, and India aim to shape the future of technology governance, strengthen innovation, and build security in key technological sectors.

QUICK READ

UN raises concern over Pak blasphemy case

Geneva

During the UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva, Hulda Fahmi of Jubilee Campaign highlighted Shagufta Kiran's blasphemy case. Kiran, a Christian woman, has been jailed in Rawalpindi since July 2021 over alleged WhatsApp messages. Fahmi urged repeal of harsh blasphemy laws and called for Kiran's release. Reports reveal over 750 people face blasphemy charges in Pakistan, with minorities often targeted. HRCP warned of social media-driven mob attacks, forced conversions, and lack of legal aid for accused, urging reforms to protect religious freedom.

Azerbaijan condemns Iran drone attacks

Baku

Azerbaijan condemned drone attacks from Iran targeting Nakhchivan, causing damage and injuring two civilians. One drone hit the airport terminal, while another fell near a school in Shakarabad village. The Foreign Ministry called the attack a violation of international law and demanded Iran provide explanations and prevent future incidents. Azerbaijan summoned Iranian Ambassador Mojtaba Demirchilou to deliver a formal protest and warned it reserves the right to respond. The incident raised regional tensions and highlighted cross-border security concerns.

Ex-PM KP Oli votes in Nepal elections

Bhaktapur

Former Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli cast his vote in Bhaktapur for the 2026 General Elections. Oli, the CPN-UML prime ministerial candidate, joined millions of voters in electing 275 House of Representatives members. Over 18.9 million people, including a large youth population, are eligible to vote. With 6,541 candidates contesting across first-past-the-post and proportional representation systems, 23,112 polling centres operate under tight security. The Election Commission aims to release first results within 24 hours of counting, ensuring a smooth democratic process.

'Keep going until the end': US reaffirms support to Israel

The statement came during a call between US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth and Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz amid escalating tensions with Iran

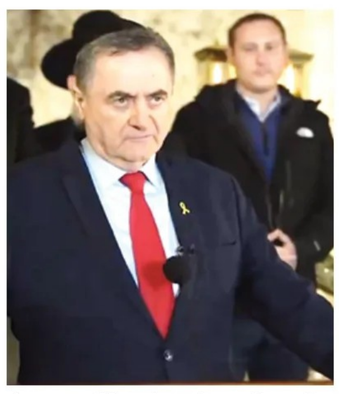
JERUSALEM

US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth told Israel to "continue to the end, we are with you," affirming full support for the country's defense.

The statement came during a call between Hegseth and Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz. Katz expressed condolences for six US service members killed in Iranian attacks and thanked Hegseth and US President Trump for their strong support and military cooperation.

Katz highlighted the joint efforts between Israel and the US to counter Iranian threats. He emphasized that Israel will continue protecting US troops in the region while defending its citizens from Iranian missile attacks. Hegseth praised the Israel Defense Forces' capabilities and the unprecedented military collaboration with the US, reinforcing their commitment to shared objectives.

Meanwhile, tensions escalated as Iran threatened Israel's Dimona nuclear site if attempts were made to overthrow the Islamic Republic. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps launched the nineteenth wave of Operation 'True Promise 4,' a missile and



drone offensive targeting Israeli and American positions. According to Tehran, more than seven advanced radar systems were destroyed, significantly impairing regional surveillance.

The IRGC stated that these strikes were a response to "unprovoked aggression" by Israel and the US and are part of ongoing efforts to deter further military actions. Katz had earlier warned that any new Iranian leadership would be a legitimate target for elimination, reflecting the intensifying regional standoff.

Analysts note that US-Israel coordination has significantly shaped military dynamics in the Middle East, signaling heightened preparedness and mutual strategic commitment amid escalating threats from Iran.

Iran calls torpedoing of ship by US an 'atrocity'

Tehran: Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi condemned the United States for sinking the Iranian vessel IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean, warning that Washington would regret the precedent set. Araghchi described the attack as an "atrocity at sea," noting that the frigate, carrying nearly 130 sailors as a guest of India's Navy, was struck in international waters without warning. The incident was confirmed by US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who said an American submarine fired a torpedo to sink IRIS Dena. Hegseth highlighted that it was the first time since World War II that a US Navy submarine had sunk an enemy ship using a single Mark 48 torpedo. General Dan Caine, US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the operation a demonstration of America's global reach. In response, Iran threatened to target Israel's Dimona nuclear site if attempts are made to topple the Islamic Republic.

India urges citizens in UAE to 'remain vigilant'

Abu Dhabi: The Indian Embassy in the UAE on Thursday issued a fresh advisory urging Indian nationals to remain vigilant, calm, and follow safety guidelines amid ongoing security concerns in the region. The advisory comes as airspace and regular flight operations in the UAE remain temporarily suspended, although limited non-scheduled flights to India have started in coordination with local authorities. Stranded Indian nationals can contact airlines for assistance. The Embassy emphasized that Indian citizens should adhere to safety protocols issued by UAE authorities and stay updated through official advisories. It confirmed that the Embassy in Abu Dhabi, the Consulate in Dubai, and outsourced passport, visa, and consular services continue to operate normally. Helpline numbers were also provided for urgent queries. For those whose visas have expired after February 28 and who are unable to depart, the UAE Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Custom & Port Authority (ICP) has announced a waiver of overstay fines, including for tourist and visit visas. The advisory highlighted that the Indian government is closely monitoring developments and prioritizing the safety and well-being of its citizens abroad. Embassy and Consulate officials are in constant contact with UAE authorities and community leaders to ensure Indian nationals receive necessary support.

China to send special envoy amid West Asia conflict

Beijing: China confirmed on Thursday that it will send Special Envoy Zhai Jun to the Middle East to help de-escalate tensions amid the ongoing regional conflict. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said dialogue and negotiation are the only effective solutions and that continued escalation serves no country's interests. Mao emphasized that China is "gravely concerned" about the situation and is maintaining communication with all parties involved, while working with the international community to build consensus. "War and force cannot solve issues permanently. Political and diplomatic settlements must be upheld," she said, adding that China will actively engage with all sides to reduce hostilities. The announcement comes after a joint US-Israel strike in Iran killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior figures, prompting retaliatory drone and missile attacks from Tehran across multiple Arab countries. The conflict has widened as Iran targeted American military bases and Israeli assets, while Israel continued strikes on Iran and expanded operations into Lebanon against Hezbollah. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has held phone talks with counterparts from Russia, Iran, Oman, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. During discussions, he urged adherence to the United Nations Charter, rejected arbitrary use of force, and called for immediate halts to military operations.

China ups military spending, lowers growth target

BEIJING

China has announced plans to increase military spending by 7 per cent while lowering its economic growth target to 4–5 per cent this year.

The defense budget will reach around USD 275 billion, marking the 11th consecutive year of single-digit increases. Although slower than last year's 7.2 per cent rise, the spending remains significant, reflecting China's ongoing focus on strengthening its military capabilities.

Premier Li Qiang presented the government work report to the National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The report also set a consumer price index increase of about 2 per cent, the creation of 12 million new urban jobs, and a 10 per cent growth in research and development spending. Chinese President Xi Jinping and top leadership attended the session, which will formalize the 15th Five-Year Plan.

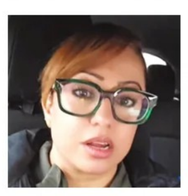
The defense budget growth is modest relative to key global indicators, including GDP share, per capita spending, and spending per military personnel, according to state media. Analysts note that the slower rise may reflect economic pressures as China's long-term growth is projected to decline to 3–4 per cent by 2030. The announcement comes ahead of US President Donald Trump's upcoming visit to China. Last month, Xi dismissed top military officials, including Zhang Youxia and three retired generals, signaling ongoing leadership changes in the People's Liberation Army.

US Department of Defense reports suggest actual Chinese defense spending may be higher than officially declared, with 2024 estimates ranging between USD 304 billion and USD 377 billion.

Khalistani critic Nancy Grewal stabbed to death

Continued from page 1

Nancy Grewal, a well-known social media influencer in Canada's Punjabi community, was stabbed to death at her residence on March 3. Emergency responders found her with severe stab wounds shortly before 9:30 p.m. She was rushed to a hospital but died shortly after arriving. Grewal's murder has shocked the Windsor-LaSalle community and online followers.



Grewal gained prominence for her outspoken commentary on Punjab, Indian politics, and diaspora issues. She frequently criticized Khalistani movements and leaders, including Gurpatwant Singh Pannun of Sikhs for Justice. She accused such activists of spreading division, defaming Sikh institutions, and misusing gurdwaras for separatist propaganda. Grewal encouraged her audience to address concerns directly in India rather than supporting extremist agendas from abroad.

The LaSalle Police Service described the case as an "isolated" incident. Investigators are reviewing the scene and seeking assistance from neighbors, requesting any video surveillance that could help trace the attackers. A police statement offered condolences to Grewal's family and reassured the public that a thorough investigation is underway.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	6		8		2		9	
3		4		9		6		5
9		5	6		4		1	
	9		4		7	5		2
6		3		2			8	
	7			1		4		9
	1			7			5	
8		9	1		5	2		6
	5			8			4	

4	8	1	3	7	5	2	6	9
5	7	3	9	2	6	8	1	4
2	6	9	8	1	4	3	7	5
7	9	4	5	8	2	6	3	1
3	5	8	1	6	9	4	2	7
1	2	6	4	3	7	9	5	8
8	1	7	2	9	3	5	4	6
9	4	2	6	5	1	7	8	3
6	3	5	7	4	8	1	9	2

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

'INDIA CHAMPIONS CULTURAL RIGHTS AND HERITAGE PROTECTION'

GENEVA

At the 61st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, India's efforts to safeguard and promote cultural rights were highlighted.

Sai Sampath Mettu, CEO of the ECO FAWN Society, delivered a video statement during the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, praising India's approach to culture as a public good and a tool for peace and social cohesion.

Mettu emphasized that India actively engages in global cultural discussions to strengthen participation, protect heritage, and empower artists. The intervention noted India's role at UNESCO Mondiacult 2025, where the country raised key issues including cultural rights, artificial intelligence's influence on cultural production, and culture's role in promoting peace. India also advocated for a dedicated global culture goal in the post-2030 development agenda to integrate cultural sustainability into international policies. The statement highlighted India's efforts to protect intellectual property rights for artists and creators, ensuring they receive recognition and fair compensation. It also recognized initiatives to preserve tangible and intangible cultural traditions under UNESCO frameworks, demonstrating India's commitment to international cooperation and wider access to culture.

NEPAL GOES FOR FRESH POLLS

Fight for good governance will go on: Nepal Gen Z

KATHMANDU

Nepal's Gen Z activists say their fight for accountability and good governance will continue even after today's mid-term elections.

The youth-led movement of 2025 toppled the K.P. Sharma Oli government following protests against corruption, nepotism, and a government ban on social media. While the election will usher in a new government, young leaders like Amrita Ban, 23, assert that the agenda for transparency and justice remains active. Standing before the burnt facade of the state road department, she clarified that much of the vandalism was caused by fringe political elements, not the protesters themselves.

The 2025 demonstrations began peacefully but escalated after police used lethal force on September 8, 2025, leaving 19 dead. Rajat Das Shreshtha, 25, a musician and activist, said Gen Z will monitor the new government, supporting positive actions but continuing to demand accountability. Many youth voters are not tied to any party, with some awaiting alternatives outside the existing political system.

Activists are also pushing for the release of the enquiry report on the September violence, fair compensation for victims' families, voter registration, and systemic reforms to reduce corruption. Journalist Bikas Acharya compared Nepal's movement with Bangladesh's 2024 protests, noting that Nepal's youth wisely chose to work with existing parties, maintaining mass influence while avoiding political obligations.

Several young voters reported backing individual candidates rather than parties. Public figures like cine star Reecha Sharma praised the Gen Z movement for raising political awareness among Nepalese youth and elders alike.

Walloping, Not a Choke: Conrad Blunt After South Africa's Semifinal Exit

South Africa coach says crushing defeat left team without even a chance

KOLKATA

South Africa head coach Shukri Conrad did not mince words after his team's crushing nine-wicket defeat to New Zealand in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup semifinal, insisting it was "not a choke but a walloping".

South Africa's exit added yet another chapter to their long list of heartbreaks in ICC tournaments. Chasing a competitive 170, New Zealand stormed home in just 12.5 overs on Wednesday night, riding on a stunning batting display by their openers.

Finn Allen smashed an unbeaten 100 off just 33 balls — the fastest century in the history of the tournament — while Tim Seifert blasted 58 off 33 balls as the Kiwi duo dismantled the South African bowling attack with remarkable ease. Responding to suggestions that South Africa had once again "choked" in a knockout match, Conrad dismissed the label bluntly.

"I don't know if tonight was a choke. I thought it was a bloody walloping," Conrad said. "In order for you to choke, you must have had a sniff in the game. We didn't have a sniff."

Using colourful Afrikaans expressions, he described the defeat as a "snotklap", loosely meaning a heavy smack or a hiding that comes unexpectedly.

Earlier, South Africa struggled to build momentum after being sent in to bat. New Zealand's Cole McConchie struck early, removing Quinton de Kock (10) and Ryan Rickelton (0) in successive deliveries.

The middle order also failed to capitalise, with Aiden Markram (18), David Miller (6) and Dewald Brevis (34) unable to accelerate.

A late surge from Marco Jansen, who remained unbeaten on 55 off 30 balls, and Tristan Stubbs (29) helped South Africa post a respectable total.

Conrad admitted New Zealand had simply outplayed his side. "They exploited the conditions well and strangled us up front.

A lot didn't go right tonight, but that was probably because they were so good," he said.

Despite the painful defeat, Conrad said he remained proud of his team's remarkable run in the tournament, where they won seven consecutive matches before the semifinal.

"Not many people gave us a chance before the World Cup. We played some exceptional cricket. But right now, that's no consolation," he said.

Sports Minister Signals Possible Overhaul of SL Cricket After T20WC Exit

Government considers interim committee to rebuild cricket after disappointing T20 WC.

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's disappointing campaign in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup could trigger a major overhaul of the country's cricket administration, with Sports Minister Sunil Kumara Gamage indicating that an interim committee may be formed to "rebuild" the sport.

Sri Lanka endured a poor tournament, crashing out after losing all their Super Eight matches. The team had also suffered an earlier setback in the preliminary round, losing to lower-ranked Zimbabwe — a result that further intensified criticism of the team and the administration.

Addressing reporters on Thursday, Gamage said discussions were underway with the International Cricket Council (ICC) about transferring the administration of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) to an interim committee.

"Discussions are underway with the ICC to hand over the administration of SLC to an interim committee to rebuild the sport," he said.

The move comes amid growing public anger over the team's performances. Last week, protesters gathered outside the SLC headquarters demanding the resignation of the current administration led by chairman Shammi Silva, whose tenure runs until May 2027.

Gamage said the government was proceeding cautiously and in consultation with the ICC to avoid any sanctions for political interference in cricket governance.

"We can't risk having a ban again from the ICC, so everything must be done in concurrence with them," he noted.

Sri Lanka had previously faced an ICC suspension in 2024 after the then Sports Minister Roshan Ranasinghe dismissed Silva over corruption allegations.

The suspension led to the relocation of the 2025 Under-19 World Cup from Sri Lanka to South Africa due to concerns over government interference.

According to Sri Lanka's Sports Law of 1973, the Sports Minister has the authority to discipline and intervene in sports bodies when required.

Gamage said the government's goal was to restore Sri Lankan cricket to its former glory, recalling the era when the national team was among the world's best. Sri Lanka won the T20 World Cup in 2014 and finished runners-up in two earlier editions.

Meanwhile, captain Dasun Shanaka urged supporters to ease criticism of players, admitting the team had failed to meet expectations.

"We feel sorry because we haven't given our fans anything to be happy about," Shanaka said after the team's exit from the tournament.

Djokovic Says He Will Keep Playing As Long As He Has 'Fire and Flare'

INDIAN WELLS

Novak Djokovic says he has no immediate plans to retire from tennis, insisting he will continue competing as long as he retains the motivation, quality and passion for the sport.

The 38-year-old Serbian legend believes he is still capable of challenging the world's best players, pointing to his impressive run at the Australian Open earlier this year as proof that he remains a major contender on the biggest stages.

Djokovic produced one of the tournament's standout matches when he defeated defending champion Jannik Sinner in a gripping five-set semifinal before eventually losing to world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the final.

Reflecting on that campaign, the 24-time Grand Slam champion said the performances reinforced his belief that he can still compete at the highest level.

"It was an incredible feeling to beat Sinner in five sets in one of the epic matches I've played in recent times in Australia," Djokovic told reporters at the Indian Wells Masters in California.

"Then I had another great match with Carlos, who was just too good in the end. For me, that was a phenomenal result and it proved to me and others that I can still compete with the best players in the world."

Djokovic added that as long as he maintains the competitive drive that has defined his career, he sees no reason to step away from the game.

"My logic is simple — why not keep going as long as I have that fire and flair and the motivation to compete," he said.

The Serbian star, currently ranked world number three, said he now enjoys greater flexibility in managing his tournament schedule. Rather than playing a packed calendar, he focuses mainly on the four Grand Slam tournaments along with select warm-up events.

One of the competitions he continues to prioritise is the Indian Wells tournament, where he is a five-time champion and remains a crowd favourite.

"I still enjoy the thrill of competition," Djokovic said. "I enjoy going out there in front of fans and fighting for victories. As long as I feel competitive and motivated, I'll keep playing."

Arsenal Extend Premier League Lead as Manchester City Drop Points

LONDON

Arsenal F.C. strengthened their grip on the Premier League title race after a hard-fought 1–0 win over Brighton & Hove Albion F.C., while defending champions Manchester City F.C. were held to a dramatic 2–2 draw by Nottingham Forest F.C.

The victory extended Arsenal's lead at the top of the table to seven points, putting them firmly in control of the title race as the season heads into its decisive phase. The Gunners, who have not won the English league since 2004, remain favourites to lift the trophy but still face pressure from Manchester City, who have a game in hand.

At the Amex Stadium, Bukayo Saka marked his 300th appearance for Arsenal with the decisive goal in the ninth minute. Cutting in from the right flank, the England international fired a shot from the edge of the box that deflected off Brighton midfielder Carlos Baleba before slipping past goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen.

Brighton dominated possession and created several chances, but Arsenal's defence held firm to secure a tense victory.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta praised his players for grinding out the result after a demanding few weeks. "This was a really difficult one after everything we've been through recently," Arteta said. "Every Premier League game offers different challenges. The effort from the boys was astronomical."

Arsenal edge Brighton while Manchester City slip in thrilling draw against Forest

Meanwhile, Manchester City missed the chance to stay closer to the leaders after twice surrendering their advantage against Nottingham Forest.

City opened the scoring through January signing Antoine Semenyo, but Forest responded when Morgan Gibbs-White produced a moment of brilliance with a backheel finish in the 56th minute. Rodri restored City's lead with a header from Rayan Aït-Nouri's corner, only for Elliot Anderson to equalise again with a superb strike that secured a crucial point for Forest.

City manager Pep Guardiola remained philosophical about the result, noting that plenty of matches remain in the title race.

Elsewhere, interim boss Michael Carrick suffered his first defeat in charge of Manchester United F.C. as they lost 2–1 to Newcastle United F.C. at St James' Park despite playing against 10 men for much of the match.

In another key result, Chelsea F.C. moved into the Champions League race after João Pedro scored a hat-trick in a 4–1 win over Aston Villa F.C., lifting the London club to fifth place in the standings.

NORRIS

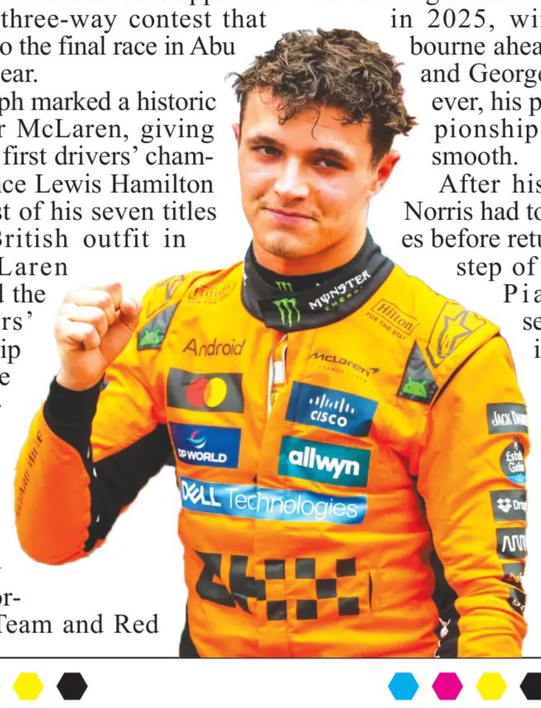
Hungrier Than Ever to Defend Formula One World Title

MELBOURNE

Lando Norris says last season's dramatic Formula One championship battle has only increased his determination to defend his crown as the new campaign begins this weekend.

The Formula One world champion heads into the season-opening Australian Grand Prix with renewed motivation after edging out teammate Oscar Piastri and Max Verstappen in a gripping three-way contest that went down to the final race in Abu Dhabi last year.

The triumph marked a historic moment for McLaren, giving the team its first drivers' championship since Lewis Hamilton won the first of his seven titles with the British outfit in 2008. McLaren also secured the constructors' championship during the same campaign.



Despite expectations that Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team and Red Bull Racing may start the new season slightly ahead in performance, Norris insisted he was not concerned about where McLaren stands at the beginning of the year.

"I don't think we're starting on the back foot. Even if you're second, third or fourth quickest, that's still a very good position to start," Norris said ahead of the Melbourne race.

The 26-year-old began his title-winning season in perfect fashion in 2025, winning in Melbourne ahead of Verstappen and George Russell. However, his path to the championship was far from smooth.

After his early victory, Norris had to wait seven races before returning to the top step of the podium, as Piastri briefly seized momentum in the title race before Verstappen also entered the fight. The championship eventually developed into one of the most competitive battles in recent years.

Ankita Raina, Desai Advance in ITF W35 Kalaburagi; Local Hope Soha Sadiq Exits

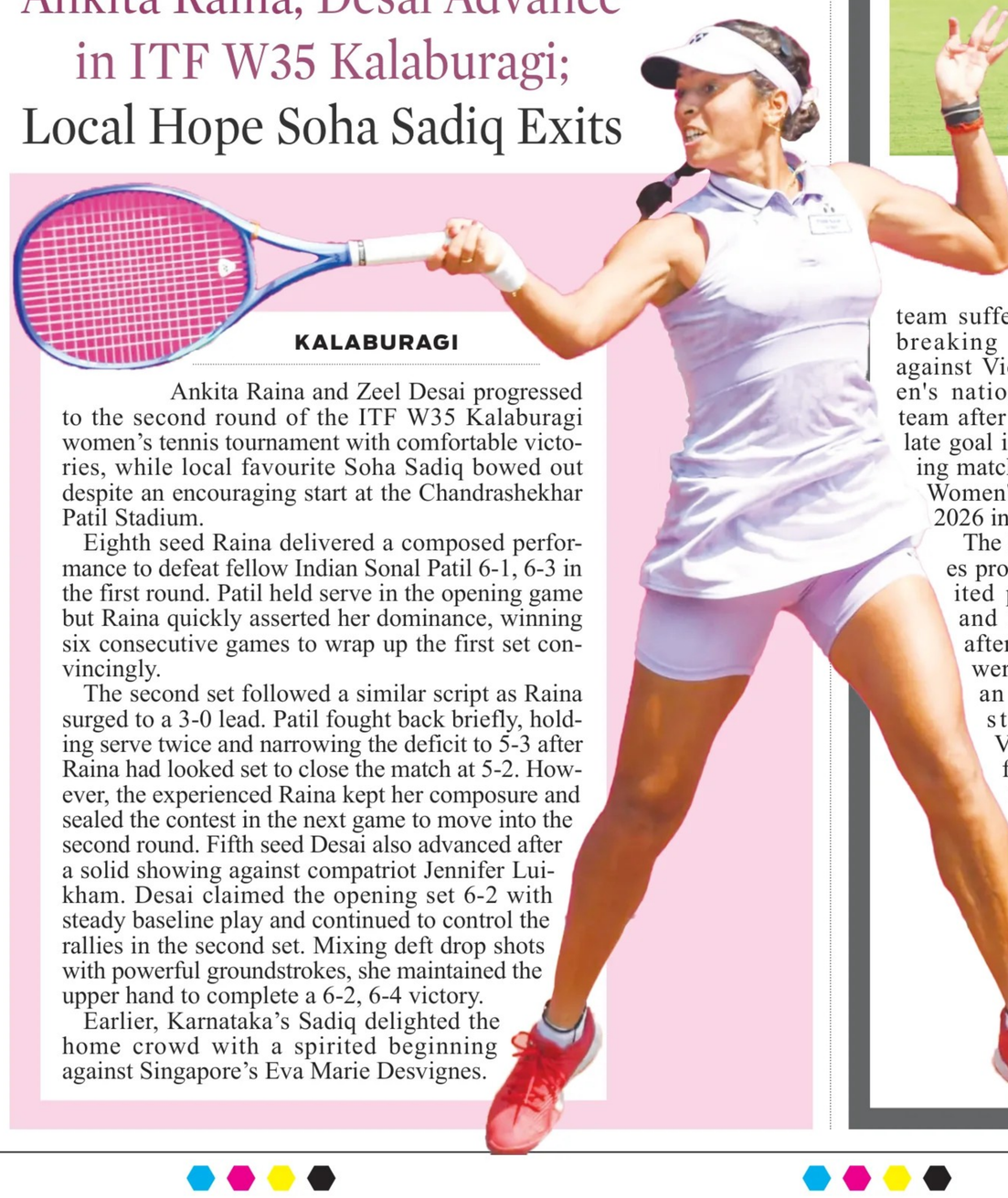
KALABURAGI

Ankita Raina and Zeel Desai progressed to the second round of the ITF W35 Kalaburagi women's tennis tournament with comfortable victories, while local favourite Soha Sadiq bowed out despite an encouraging start at the Chandrashekhar Patil Stadium.

Eighth seed Raina delivered a composed performance to defeat fellow Indian Sonal Patil 6-1, 6-3 in the first round. Patil held serve in the opening game but Raina quickly asserted her dominance, winning six consecutive games to wrap up the first set convincingly.

The second set followed a similar script as Raina surged to a 3-0 lead. Patil fought back briefly, holding serve twice and narrowing the deficit to 5-3 after Raina had looked set to close the match at 5-2. However, the experienced Raina kept her composure and sealed the contest in the next game to move into the second round. Fifth seed Desai also advanced after a solid showing against compatriot Jennifer Luikham. Desai claimed the opening set 6-2 with steady baseline play and continued to control the rallies in the second set. Mixing deft drop shots with powerful groundstrokes, she maintained the upper hand to complete a 6-2, 6-4 victory.

Earlier, Karnataka's Sadiq delighted the home crowd with a spirited beginning against Singapore's Eva Marie Desvignes.



India Women Suffer Injury-Time Defeat Against Vietnam in Asian Cup Opener

PERTH

India women's national football team suffered a heartbreaking 2–1 defeat against Vietnam women's national football team after conceding a late goal in their opening match of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 in Perth.

The Blue Tigresses produced a spirited performance and fought back after trailing but were undone by an injury-time strike from Vietnamese forward Nguyen Thi Van Su, who scored both goals for her side. Vietnam dominated possession in the early stages, forcing Indian goalkeeper Panthoi Chanu into action with a series of saves.

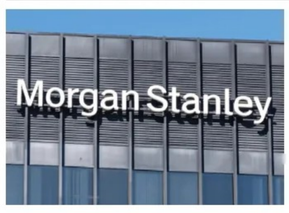
India's first clear opportunity came in the eighth minute when Dangmei Grace controlled a high ball and set up Sangita Basfore, but her half-volley was comfortably collected by Vietnam goalkeeper Tran Thi Kim Thanh.

Vietnam nearly took the lead in the 14th minute when Nguyen Thi Bich Thuy struck the crossbar after capitalising on a misplaced pass by Sangita.

The breakthrough finally came in the 30th minute when Van Su ran onto a pass from Thai Thi Thao and curled a precise shot from inside the penalty area to give Vietnam the lead.

India responded positively in the second half after head coach Amelia Valverde made key substitutions, introducing debutant Sanfida Nongrum and Rimpa Haldar.

QUICK READ



Morgan Stanley cuts 2,500 jobs worldwide

NEW DELHI

Morgan Stanley has reportedly laid off about 2,500 employees worldwide, nearly three percent of its global workforce. The job cuts began in early March and affected several divisions including institutional securities, wealth management and investment management. Reports say the decision is linked to changing business priorities, global location strategy and employee performance reviews, not artificial intelligence reforms. Financial advisors were not affected. The company has not officially commented yet. The layoffs come despite Morgan Stanley recording strong revenues in 2025.

Women seek leadership roles in rising numbers

NEW DELHI

Applications by women for leadership and governance roles in India have increased sharply, showing growing confidence in pursuing higher positions. A report by Apna.co revealed that applications for strategic and top management roles rose by 43 percent in the past year, while risk management and compliance roles saw a 51 percent rise. Women are also applying more for full-time jobs and skill-based roles such as data science, research and product management. The report shows a positive shift as more women aim for career growth and leadership opportunities instead of remaining only in entry-level positions across industries nationwide.

Omnitech Engineering shares debut below IPO price

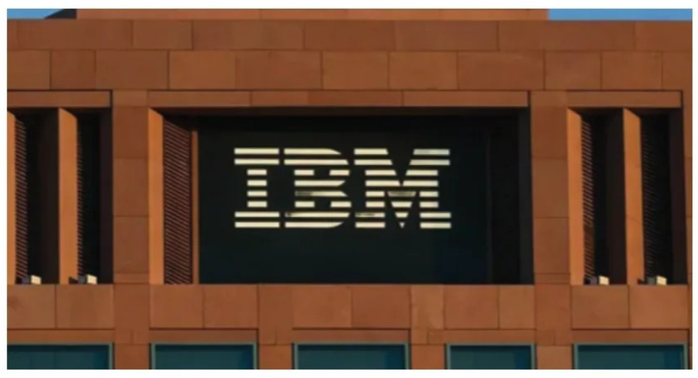
NEW DELHI

Shares of Omnitech Engineering made a weak debut on Indian stock exchanges on Thursday, listing at ₹205 on the Bombay Stock Exchange, nearly 10 percent below the IPO price of ₹227. On the National Stock Exchange of India, the stock opened at ₹202. However, buying interest soon lifted the share price by over 9 percent to an intraday high of ₹224. The company produces precision components for global manufacturers and exports most of its products. Funds raised through the IPO will support new manufacturing units, solar investments, and partial debt repayment plans.

IBM launches first AI infra innovation centre in India

India is at a pivotal moment in its AI journey, and infrastructure will define the pace and scale at which organisations can innovate'

NEW DELHI



Leading technology company IBM has launched its first Infrastructure Innovation Centre in India to support faster growth of artificial intelligence and advanced computing solutions.

The new facility has been set up at the company's India Systems Development Lab campus and is expected to help businesses design stronger digital infrastructure for the future.

The centre, named Sangam Infrastructure Innovation Centre, will work as a collaborative engineering hub where experts, technology partners and companies can jointly develop new AI-based solutions. Systems architects, infrastructure specialists and engineers from IBM will work closely with clients, software developers and global technology partners to build practical tools powered by artificial intelligence.

By bringing hybrid cloud technology, modern infrastructure platforms and AI capabilities together in one place, the centre aims to speed up the development of secure and scalable enterprise systems. These systems are expected to help organisations handle large amounts of data while improving efficiency and reliability.

Sandip Patel, Managing Director of IBM India and South Asia, said India is currently at an important stage in its AI journey. According to him, the strength of infrastructure will decide how quickly companies can adopt and expand AI-driven innovation across industries. Subhathra Srinivasaraghavan, Vice President of IBM India Systems Development Lab, said powerful AI solutions depend on reliable infrastructure. She explained that the new centre will help businesses deploy AI systems while ensuring safety, governance and strong performance. A recent study by the IBM Institute for Business Value found that 58 percent of Indian organisations have increased infrastructure investments to support growing demand for AI technologies and digital transformation across many sectors nationwide today.

Maha economy to grow 7.9% in 2025-26, outpacing national growth

MUMBAI

Maharashtra's economy is expected to grow strongly in the financial year 2025-26, with a projected growth rate of 7.9%, slightly higher than India's overall expected growth rate of 7.6%.

The positive outlook was presented in the State Economic Survey tabled in the Assembly on Thursday by Minister of State for Finance Ashish Jaiswal.

According to the survey, Maharashtra continues to remain one of the main economic drivers of the country. The state's nominal Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices is expected to grow by about 10.4%.

Estimates suggest that the nominal GSDP could reach nearly ₹51 lakh crore during 2025-26, while the real GSDP at constant prices is estimated at ₹28.82 lakh crore.

The agriculture and allied sectors are expected to grow by 3.4%, while the industrial sector may record growth of 5.7%. The services sector is likely to perform strongly with an estimated growth of 9%. The report also highlighted the state's financial position. The fiscal deficit is expected to remain at 2.7% of GSDP, while the revenue deficit may be around 0.9%. Public debt is projected to rise to ₹9.32 lakh crore in 2025-26 compared to ₹8.39 lakh crore in the previous year.

In the agriculture sector, kharif sowing was carried out on more than 157 lakh hectares. Production of cereals, sugarcane, cotton, pulses and oilseeds is expected to see noticeable growth. Meanwhile, rabi sowing covered nearly 67 lakh hectares.

The survey also noted that Maharashtra's share in the country's nominal GDP remains the highest at about 14%. The per capita income of the state is estimated at ₹3,47,903, significantly higher than the national average of ₹2,19,575.

The survey also noted that Maharashtra's share in the country's nominal GDP remains the highest at about 14%.

IRAN-ISRAEL CONFLICT MAY SHAKE PAK ECONOMY

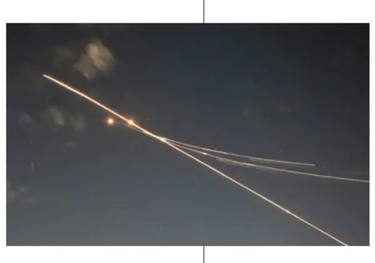
NEW DELHI

Rising tensions in West Asia following the reported killing of Ali Khamenei in strikes involving the United States and Israel could have serious economic consequences for Pakistan, analysts have warned.

According to an article published by China Daily, the conflict has created deep concern in Pakistan, which shares close economic and regional links with countries in West Asia.

Former Pakistan foreign secretary Salman Bashir said the war could reshape the entire Middle East and impact the global economy. He warned that the conflict might last for a long time and its geopolitical effects could be severe.

Following the news of Khamenei's killing, protests broke out in several parts of Pakistan. Demonstrators expressed anger against the United States, leading to violent clashes in some cities. Reports say at least 25 people were killed and many others injured during the unrest.



Large protests were reported near the US Consulate in Karachi, where demonstrators attempted to enter the building. Similar demonstrations were also seen near the American consulate in Lahore, though police managed to control the situation.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed condolences to Iran and its people. In a message posted on social media, he said Pakistan stood with Iran in its moment of grief and also raised concerns over violations of international law.

Experts believe that even though Pakistan is not directly involved in the conflict, the country could still face serious economic challenges. Rising fuel prices, higher electricity costs and disruptions in trade could affect daily life.

Analysts also warned that many Pakistanis working in Gulf countries may face job losses if the crisis continues, which could reduce the flow of money sent back home.

Mideast tensions may slightly impact Indian economy

NEW DELHI

Rising tensions in the Middle East may have only a limited impact on India's economy, the rupee, and growth, according to a report released on Thursday.

The report said that while global uncertainty may increase, India's strong economic fundamentals could help the country remain stable.

According to the report, if crude oil prices rise by 10 percent above the baseline estimate of the Reserve Bank of India, inflation may increase slightly by around 30 basis points. However, the effect on the rupee and overall economic growth is expected to remain small.

A five percent fall in the rupee's value may push inflation up by about 35 basis points, but it could also support GDP growth by nearly 25 basis points.

Experts believe that the rupee's depreciation may remain limited due to timely foreign exchange interventions by the central bank. If tensions in the region ease, the local currency is likely to stabilise again.

India's economic indicators remain strong, with foreign exchange reserves exceeding 700 billion dollars and manageable trade and fiscal deficits.

Gold, silver surge amid rising global tensions

NEW DELHI

Gold and silver prices witnessed a sharp rise on Thursday as investors rushed toward safe-haven assets amid escalating tensions in the Middle East. The surge came as fears of rising inflation and disruptions to global energy supplies increased uncertainty in financial markets. On the Multi Commodity Exchange of India, gold April futures rose 0.31 percent to ₹1,62,018 per 10 grams, while silver May futures climbed 1.50 percent to ₹2,69,551 per kilogram during intra-day trading. Earlier in the day, silver prices jumped more than 3 percent and gold gained over 1 percent before easing slightly due to profit booking by traders. In global markets, spot silver increased to $84.43 per ounce and spot gold moved up to $5,176.69 per ounce. Analysts linked the rally to the ongoing conflict involving United States, Israel, and Iran, which has raised fears about energy supply disruptions, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz.

India leads Asia Pacific office leasing demand

BENGALURU

India has emerged as the biggest contributor to office leasing demand in the Asia Pacific region in 2025, accounting for nearly 68 percent of total leasing activity, according to a report.

The study highlighted India's growing importance in the regional commercial real estate market.

The report, titled "Asia Pacific Office Market Insights February 2026," stated that total office leasing across 11 major markets in the Asia Pacific region reached about 9.8 million square metres in 2025. This represents an 11 percent increase compared to the previous year. Strong demand for Grade A office spaces in countries like India, China, and Japan played a major role in this growth.

In addition to high demand, new office supply also increased significantly across the region. The report noted that supply rose by 19 percent during the year, reaching about 9.6 million square metres. Markets such as India, China, and Singapore together contributed around 82 percent of the new supply in 2025.

Experts believe India's strong economic growth, expanding global capability centres, and rising corporate demand for modern workspaces are driving this trend.

AI safeguard dispute sparks Pentagon–Anthropic tensions

SAN FRANCISCO

A dispute between artificial intelligence firm Anthropic and the United States Department of Defense has drawn attention from major technology companies and investors, who are urging both sides to resolve the conflict over AI safeguards.

The issue began after the Pentagon considered labeling Anthropic a "supply-chain risk," a move that could restrict the use of its technology by government contractors. The warning has raised concerns across the technology industry because such a designation could affect the company's business far beyond government contracts.

A leading technology trade body, the Information Technology Industry Council, whose members include Amazon, Nvidia, Apple and OpenAI, expressed concern over the possible move. The group warned that the decision could have wide implications for the growing AI sector.

The disagreement centres on how military agencies can use artificial intelligence systems. The Pentagon wants AI firms to accept an "all-lawful use" clause for their technology. However, Anthropic has refused to remove certain restrictions on its AI systems.

The company has maintained that its chatbot Claude AI should not be used for autonomous weapons or mass domestic surveillance.

Anthropic chief executive Dario Amodei has reportedly discussed the issue with major investors, including Andy Jassy of Amazon. Venture capital firms and other investors are also exploring ways to reduce tensions between the company and the government.

POSITIVE MOMENTUM

Asian markets rise despite ongoing war

TOKYO

Asian stock markets recorded strong gains on Thursday as investors cautiously returned to riskier assets despite the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Markets recovered after earlier losses, with technology stocks and major indices showing positive momentum across the region.

South Korea's benchmark KOSPI led the rally, surging 11.2 percent and recovering from steep losses seen in the previous trading session. Japan's Nikkei 225 also rose by about 2.5 percent, reflecting improved investor confidence after a rebound on Wall Street. The broader MSCI Asia-Pacific Index outside Japan jumped nearly 3.9 percent. Despite the market recovery, concerns remain high due to the ongoing tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the United States. Fresh missile attacks and military responses have raised fears of disruptions to global energy supplies and transport networks. Rising oil prices, which have gained around 16 percent since the conflict began, are also contributing to inflation worries worldwide.

In the commodities market, gold prices climbed as investors sought safer investments during uncertain times. Meanwhile, the U.S. dollar strengthened slightly against other major currencies.

Analysts warn that while markets have shown signs of recovery, volatility may continue in the coming days as investors closely watch developments in the Middle East and their potential impact on global economic stability and energy markets.

US stock futures fall amid Middle East crisis

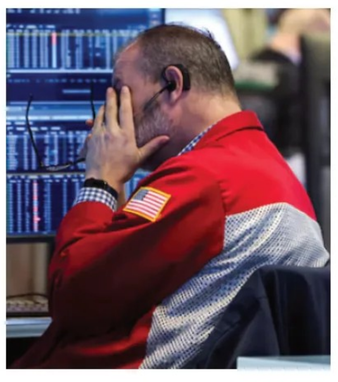
NEW YORK

U.S. stock futures slipped on Thursday as investors assessed the economic impact of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Market sentiment remained cautious after rising oil prices and geopolitical uncertainty raised concerns about inflation and global economic stability.

Futures linked to major indices showed declines.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average futures dropped 0.38 percent, while S&P 500 futures fell 0.2 percent and Nasdaq-100 futures declined 0.25 percent in early trading.

The tensions escalated after Iran reportedly launched a new wave of missiles toward Israel, adding to concerns about a prolonged regional conflict.



Rising oil prices have also raised fears that higher energy costs could fuel inflation and complicate policy decisions by the US Federal Reserve. Despite the uncertainty, technology stocks have shown some resilience this week. Bargain hunters have been buying tech shares that were heavily sold earlier, helping the Nasdaq index post modest gains over the past few days.

On Wednesday, the Nasdaq rose 1.29 percent, while the S&P 500 gained 0.8 percent and the Dow Jones closed 0.5 percent higher.

Investors are now closely watching key economic data, including weekly jobless claims and the upcoming non-farm payroll report.

Markets will also look for signals from Federal Reserve officials about future interest rate decisions.

Yash Toxic Delay Pushes Love Mocktail 3 To March

The Kannada film industry saw a sudden change this week after the makers of Yash's upcoming movie Toxic delayed its planned release. The big budget film was earlier scheduled to arrive in theatres on March 19 2026. On Wednesday the team confirmed that the movie will now release worldwide on June 4 2026. The makers said the decision was taken because of uncertainty in some international markets especially in the Middle East. Since the film aims for a global audience the team decided it was better to move the date and ensure a wider release.

The change has also helped another Kannada film Love Mocktail 3 starring Darling Krishna. The romantic drama was earlier planned for an April 10 release but will now arrive in theatres on March 19. The new date allows the film to attract festival crowds during Ugadi and Eid ul Fitr.

The Love Mocktail series already enjoys strong support from audiences after the success of its first two films. In the third part Krishna returns as actor and director. The story follows an emotional journey centered on a father and daughter. Child artist Samvrutha plays the young girl who becomes the heart of the narrative. Actress Milana Nagaraj also appears in an important role. The film's first motion poster features the song Neene Neena Nanella Aase. The soulful track is composed and sung by Nakul Abhyankar while lyrics are written by director Shashank.

Toxic Delay May Bring Vijay Jana Nayagan Release Earlier

The postponement of the much awaited film Toxic starring Yash has created new possibilities for other movies in the South film industry. The film was earlier scheduled to release in theatres on March 19 2026. However the production team recently announced that the movie will now arrive worldwide on June 4 2026.

The makers explained that the decision was taken because of the current situation in some Middle Eastern countries. Since the film is planned as a global release the team wanted to make sure it reaches audiences in every major market without difficulties. While many fans felt disappointed by the delay the change may benefit another big project.

According to several reports the team behind actor Vijay's upcoming film Jana Nayagan is now discussing a possible earlier release. Earlier plans suggested that the film could reach theatres on June 18 2026. But producers are reportedly not very interested in releasing it just two weeks after Toxic.

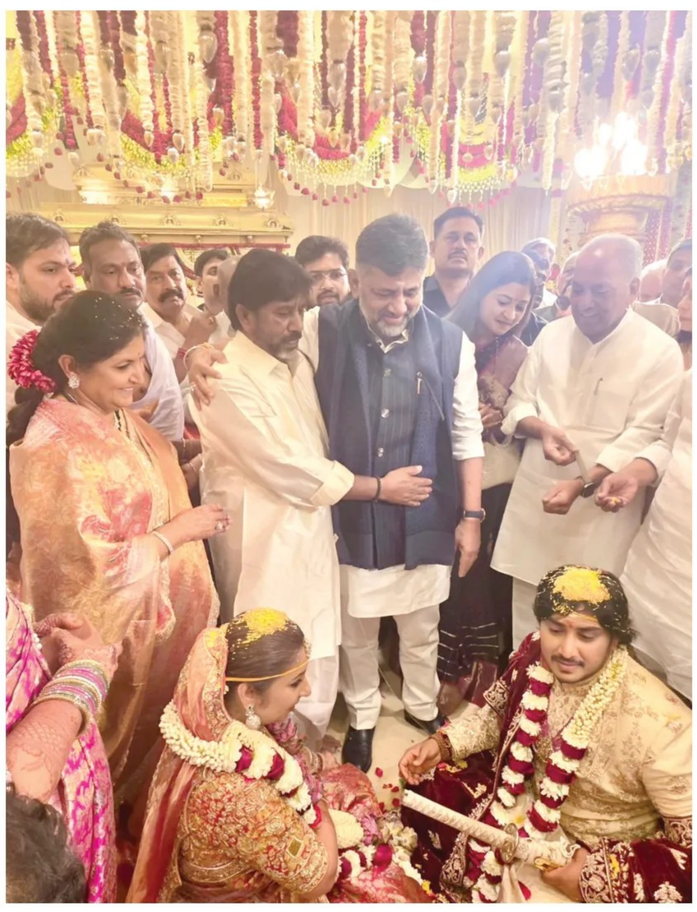
Media reports say the makers are waiting for the film's certification process. The censor board is expected to review the movie soon and give its decision by March 17 2026. If the certification is completed on time the team may choose a new release window sooner than expected.

Sources also say the film might release shortly after the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly elections. The elections are expected to take place in the third week of April 2026. If this schedule remains the same the movie could reach theatres in late April or early May.

However some reports suggest the producers may still prefer a June release because June 22 is Vijay's birthday. Releasing the film on June 18 could allow celebrations to continue through the weekend and attract huge crowds to theatres across the region.

Vijay Speaks On Jana Nayagan Row At Public Rally

Actor turned politician Vijay spoke about the controversy surrounding his upcoming film Jana Nayagan during a public rally in Thanjavur. The star addressed the ongoing discussions about the film's release and thanked supporters who stood by him during the issue. During his speech, Vijay said that many people had raised their voices when the film faced problems with its release. He also mentioned that M. K. Stalin, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, had earlier spoken about the matter. Vijay said that some people might try to silence him, but the public's voice cannot be stopped. He stated that there is a Vijay in every household, and their voices would continue to be heard. The film was earlier planned to release on January 9 but was postponed due to censorship issues. Directed by H. Vinoth, the film also stars Pooja Hegde, Prakash Raj and Mamitha Baiju.



Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar attended the wedding of Surya Vikramaditya, son of Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, and Sakshi, and conveyed his best wishes to the newly married couple in Hyderabad on Thursday.

Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar attended the reception of popular actors Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, which was held on Wednesday evening at Taj Krishna Hotel in Hyderabad, Telangana, and conveyed his wishes to the newly married couple.

Aneet Padda Wins Two Zee Cine Awards, Thanks Father

Young actress Aneet Padda dedicated her big victory at the Zee Cine Awards 2026 to her father, saying she has fulfilled his long time dream of becoming an actor. The actress won two major honours at the ceremony, including Best Debut Female and Viewer's Choice Best Actress.

During her emotional acceptance speech, Aneet spoke about how her father always wanted to become an actor when he was young. She said that winning the awards felt special because she believes she achieved the dream he once had. She expressed her love and gratitude to him, saying that the moment meant more to her because of his support and belief in her journey.

Aneet also thanked the audience for their love and encouragement. She told the crowd that the applause actors receive on screen is not only for them, but also for the stories of people and their real lives. She added that she feels grateful to play even a small role in bringing such stories to the screen.

On the professional front, Aneet made her acting debut in 2025 with the romantic drama Saiyaaraa.

MALAVIKA MOHANAN Says Cinema Today Truly Has No Borders

Actress Malavika Mohanan says that cinema today has become truly borderless, with good films reaching audiences across languages and regions. The actress recently shared her thoughts on how Indian cinema is changing and how artists now get opportunities to work across different industries.

Malavika has appeared in films in Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Hindi. During a recent interaction, she said that language is no longer a barrier if the project is strong and interesting. According to her, a good film can now travel easily and connect with viewers everywhere.

The actress also spoke about her experience working with some of the biggest stars in the country. She has shared screen space with actors such as Vijay, Mohanlal, Prabhas and Rajinikanth in different projects. Malavika said she feels fortunate to be part of this exciting phase in Indian cinema where artists and filmmakers collaborate across industries.

She also explained that filmmaking is a collaborative art where everyone on the set contributes to the final result. The actress added that she enjoys observing people and learning new things while working on film sets. Interestingly, Malavika shares the same approach when she practices her hobby of wildlife photography, which she often posts about on social media.

Talking about success and failure in films, the actress said not every project becomes a big hit. However, she believes that both success and failure are part of an actor's journey and help them grow professionally.

On the work front, Malavika was last seen in the Telugu film The Raja Saab alongside Prabhas. She is currently working on her upcoming Tamil film Sardar 2 with actor Karthi.

Mammootty Adoor Gopalakrishnan Reunite After Thirty Three Years For Film

The much awaited Malayalam film Padayaatra starring Mammootty and directed by legendary filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan has completed its shooting schedule. The makers finished the entire film in a single 40 day shoot that began on January 23 and concluded smoothly without any interruptions.

After the shoot ended, Mammootty shared a picture with the film's crew on social media and wrote Padayaatra Pack Up. The post quickly received many reactions from fans who expressed excitement and wished success for the film. Several fans also said they were eagerly waiting to watch another classic collaboration between the actor and the celebrated director. The film is special because it marks the reunion of Mammootty and Adoor Gopalakrishnan after more than three decades. Their earlier collaborations are considered important works in Malayalam cinema, and fans are expecting another powerful film from the duo.

Reports suggest that the story of Padayaatra is set in Kerala during the 1970s and 1980s, a time known for major social and political changes in the state. The film is expected to present a realistic drama, which is a style often seen in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's films.

The movie also features actors Grace Antony, Indrans, Vijayaraghavan and Aliyar in important roles. The screenplay is written by Adoor Gopalakrishnan along with K. V. Mohankumar.

Padayaatra is produced under Mammootty's banner and marks the company's eighth production. The film is expected to release after Mammootty's upcoming project Patriot, which also stars Mohanlal and is directed by Mahesh Narayanan.

PRIYANKA MOHAN'S MADE IN KOREA SET FOR OTT RELEASE

The trailer of the upcoming Tamil film Made in Korea has been released, building excitement among viewers ahead of its digital premiere. The coming of age drama stars Priyanka Mohan in the lead role and will release directly on the streaming platform Netflix on March 12, skipping a theatrical release.

The newly released trailer introduces audiences to the story of Shenba, a young woman from Kanniyakumari who dreams of visiting Seoul in South Korea. From a young age, she develops a strong interest in Korean culture and language. As she grows older, her dream of travelling to the country becomes stronger. The trailer shows the many challenges she faces while trying to achieve this dream. After years of hope and effort, she finally gets the chance to travel to Seoul. However, her journey in a new country brings both happy and difficult experiences.

Preity Mukhundhan Joins Kartik Aaryan In Fantasy Film Naagzilla

Actor Kartik Aaryan is preparing for a unique fantasy film titled Naagzilla, where he will reportedly play the role of an ichchhadhari naag, a mythical serpent with magical powers. The film is produced by Dharma Productions and has already created strong buzz among movie fans.

South Indian actress Preity Mukhundhan has been chosen as the female lead in the film. Earlier, actors Sreeleela and Pratibha Ranta were said to be in consideration for the role, but the makers have now reportedly finalised Preity.

Preity began her acting career in 2024 with the Telugu horror comedy Om Bheem Bush directed by Sree Harsha Konuganti. The film helped introduce her to audiences in the Telugu industry. She later appeared in the period drama Kannappa, which featured special appearances by stars such as Mohanlal, Prabhas and Akshay Kumar.

The actress also made her Malayalam film debut with Maine Pyar Kiya in 2025, where she acted alongside Hridhu Haroon. Apart from films, she has also appeared in music videos by artists Sai Abhyankkar and Teejay Arunasalam.

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